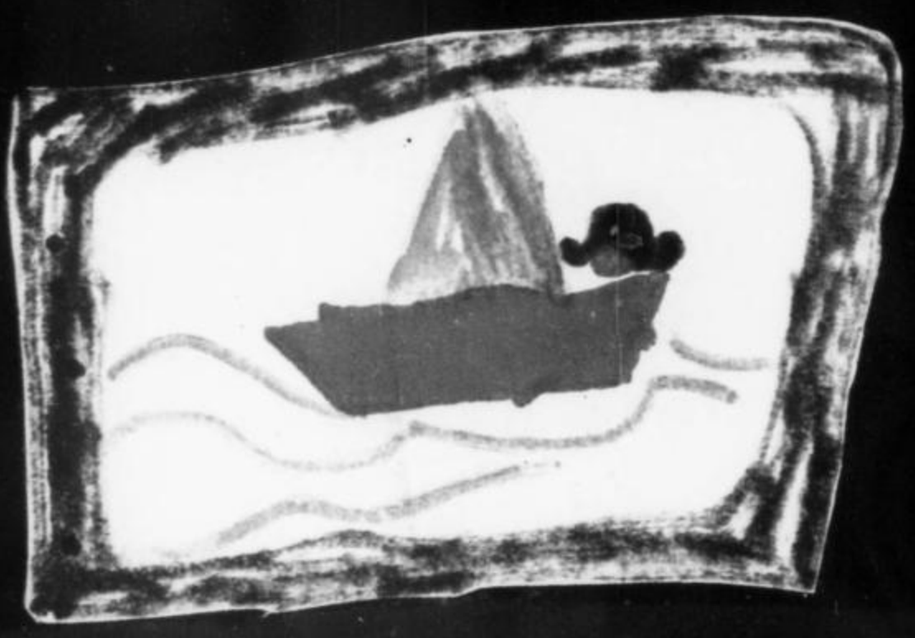
The Unesco Courier

A window open on the world



Children and the world of mass media

Photo © Laboratoires de Recherches des Musées de France, Paris

TREASURES OF WORLD ART

140

France

Country boy

Detail from *Family of Country People,* an oil painting attributed to one of three 17th century French painters, the brothers Le Nain. The artist (probably Louis Le Nain) has captured the intense curiosity, the silent bewilderment, the enigmatic look of appraisal of a child born into a world in which nothing is made to his dimension. The complete canvas, which measures 1.33 × 1.59 metres (see reproduction page 34), was discovered at an auction held in Paris in 1914. It is now preserved in the Louvre Museum.

The Unesco Courier

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Cover

In 1979, International Year of the Child, what is the impact of the media on young people living in different parts of the "global village" created by modern methods of mass communication? This issue of the *Unesco Courier* looks at the influence on children of books, school manuals and films and devotes special attention to the widely-debated question of whether television is playing a beneficial or harmful role in the development of the child's personality, ideas and behaviour. Cover shows "television" as seen by a nine-year-old French child (see page 7).

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As television has become a worldwide force, its impact on children's ideas and behaviour has generated growing concern and controversy. In some quarters, optimism about TV's potential has turned sour. Others believe that the medium is often unjustly attacked as a scapegoat for the ills of an increasingly complex world and that TV should be seen in a more balanced perspective as only one of many factors which interact in the development of the child.

Television in focus

National Circus of P'yongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Photo © Dominique Souse, Paris

by James Halloran

IN most western countries children spend a great deal of time in front of the television set, be it in the general living room, a special recreational room, or their own bedroom. In some relatively affluent areas there may be three or more television sets in the same home, and there are reports of children spending more time watching television than they spend in school, and certainly more than they spend talking to their parents.

Clearly, a medium which attracts so much attention and takes up so much time cannot be ignored. In fact we have to be prepared

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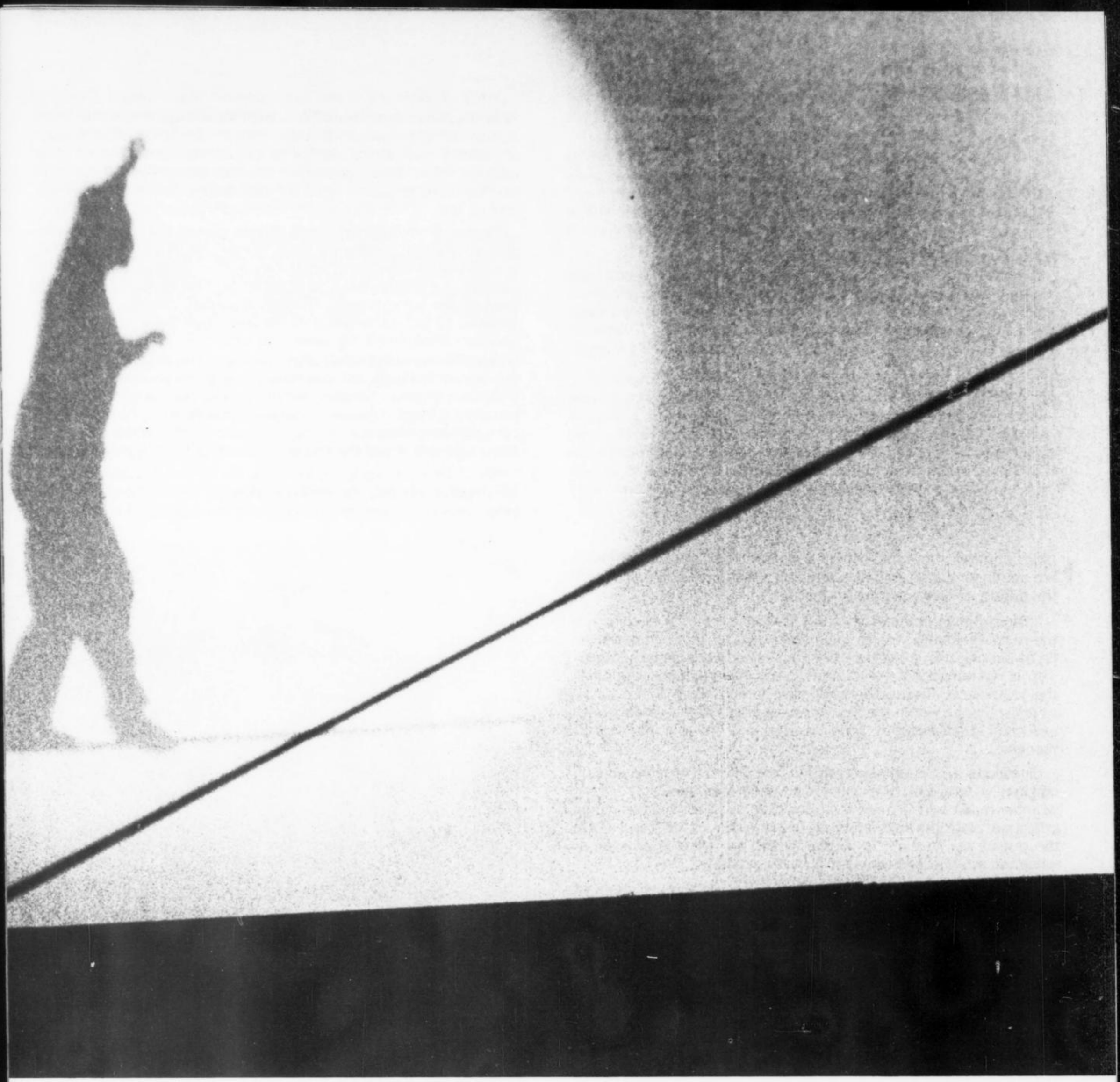


to accept the possibility that television should be regarded, along with family, school, church, etc., as an important agent in the development or socialization of the child. Additionally, in some countries, most schools have the necessary facilities and equipment and, consequently, many children are also able to view (even if what they watch is somewhat different) in the school as well as in the home.

Although in western countries television is primarily seen as an entertainment medium, it may also be used for educational purposes. There are still those, although understandably not as many as when the medium was first introduced, who speak in terms of the medium's great potential for good. In fact, at times they appear to regard it as a panacea for the social and educational ills of society.

However, when television figures prominently in the public debate, it is generally its perceived potential for harm that receives the attention, produces the concern and leads to public outcries, the formation of pressure groups, the demands for censorship, the setting up of special enquiries and commissions, and so on. In many western countries television is accused of a wide variety of offences, including the destruction of moral values, trivialization, desensitization, inhibiting creativity, forming an obstacle to education, wiping out hard-earned social and educational gains, furthering greed and unrealistic expectations and increasing crime and violence.

The attack on television does not really represent a new phenomenon; throughout history, technological innovations in communication have been received with hostility. It is convenient for us to be able to find a scapegoat, a single explanation for the ills of society since this absolves us from examining our own possible involvement in them. Admittedly, there are some who regard television as being entirely different in nature (and therefore in influence) from print and sound media, but what people are saying now about television has been said before by their forebears about films, comics, magazines and the press.

It is worth noting that, until quite recently, in the developing world the use of television was viewed with much more optimism, with regard to its potential for development, than it has been in most western countries. Even now, the complaints in the develo-

ping countries about the medium's performance and shortcomings are not unconnected with western influence, and in particular with the import of western programmes.

Unfortunately, the debate about the influence of television, and the media generally, tends to be conducted at a rather low level. Quite simply, this is because the right questions are rarely asked. This is not surprising, for those who ask the questions and make the statements (including many who would claim to be social scientists) work within the boundaries of inadequate models (rarely explicitly articulated) of both society and the communication process.

Questions and statements about "the effects of television on children", "television as a cause of some form of behaviour", etc., whether made from a positive or negative standpoint about media influence, place the medium firmly in the middle of the stage. From the outset the medium is central in the explanatory process of whatever attitude or behaviour is being examined.

Yet the use of a more appropriate model and the utilization of more refined knowledge about the behaviour in question would invariably suggest a different approach. Television would be placed in context, where due attention would be given to media other than television, and to other institutions (e.g. family, school) that might be expected to have contributed to the development of the specific behaviour and played a part in the general socialization of the child.

Television is a force, in some cases it may be an important force, to be reckoned with. But usually it is only one force amongst several forces, which interact in a complex manner in the development of the child.

To emphasize these points, however, is not to deny that television has influence. On the contrary; children may identify with television models, they may imitate what they see on the screen, and obviously they may learn from television, directly and indirectly, at several levels, just as they learn from other sources.

But television rarely, if ever, operates in isolation. Most western societies are not homogeneous. They are differentiated or stratified in some way or other. Children, in addition to basic differences in their make-up, come from a wide range of backgrounds, where they have met different people, had different experiences and opportunities, and so on. When they watch television they do so with their own special filtering equipment, which in general terms may be seen as a mesh of past experiences, present relationships and affiliations, and future expectations. It is, then, not so much a question of what television does to children as what children do with the material that television portrays.

Research suggests that, although we have *mass media,* it might be misleading to talk about *mass communication* ("a contradiction in terms in a heterogeneous society"). It is misleading to refer to children as such, and to television as such.

Children differ in so many ways. What children actually watch on television, how they attend to it, what they perceive, how they interpret the experience, what they remember, what they recall, how the media experience fits in with other experiences and information are all influenced by other factors. These include the stage of development of the child, role of parents, availability of other relevant information, alternative sources and perceived substitutes, attitudes of peers, need for expression, search for meaning, and so on.

Parents from different social classes control the viewing of preschool children in different ways (some, not at all). Young delinquents talk far less about what they see on television, not only to parents, but also to teachers and friends, than do non-delinquents from similar backgrounds; success at school, the degree of commitment to school values and the meaningfulness of the school experience influence the degree to which young people become involved in various aspects of pop culture; university students and the police interpret the portrayal of political demonstrations on television in quite different ways (individuals from both groups actually "seeing" things which didn't actually happen); those with personal experiences of living or working with ethnic minorities make different use of the media treatment of race-related material.

There are some social scientists in the United States, however, who would not equate television viewing with experiences with other media, still less with non-media experiences. To them, the

electronic medium as it currently operates in the USA, is qualitatively, in fact totally, different from other media and other sources of information and experience. They see television as the cultural arm of society, disseminating cultural symbols into the public consciousness and producing a cultural homogeneity far more pervasive than researchers in other countries, as well as other researchers in their own country, have been able to detect.

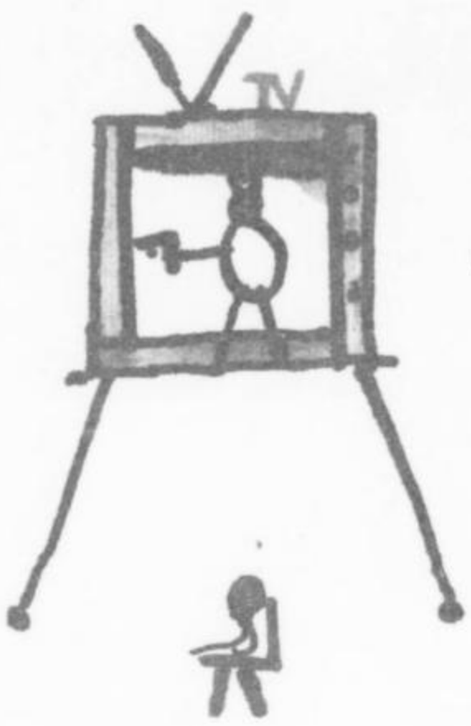
The extensive portrayal of violence on television is seen not so much as a source of imitation or stimulus to aggression but as creating fear, apprehension and insecurity which may then be translated into a firm, possibly an excessive, support for the forces of law and order, and may even lead eventually to submission and subservience to the State.

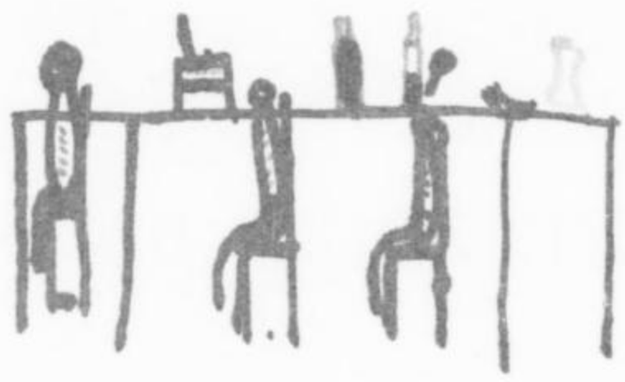
This argument, although many would question its validity, is another, more up to date and more complex version of the oft stated general case that, on the whole in western society, the media operate in the interests of the establishment and tend to serve the system by legitimating, maintaining and reinforcing the *status quo.* In passing, we might note that in non-western societies the media may perform the same basic function, albeit in a different, more direct and deliberate manner. Everywhere the medium is the system, and the medium is an agent in the socialization of the child.

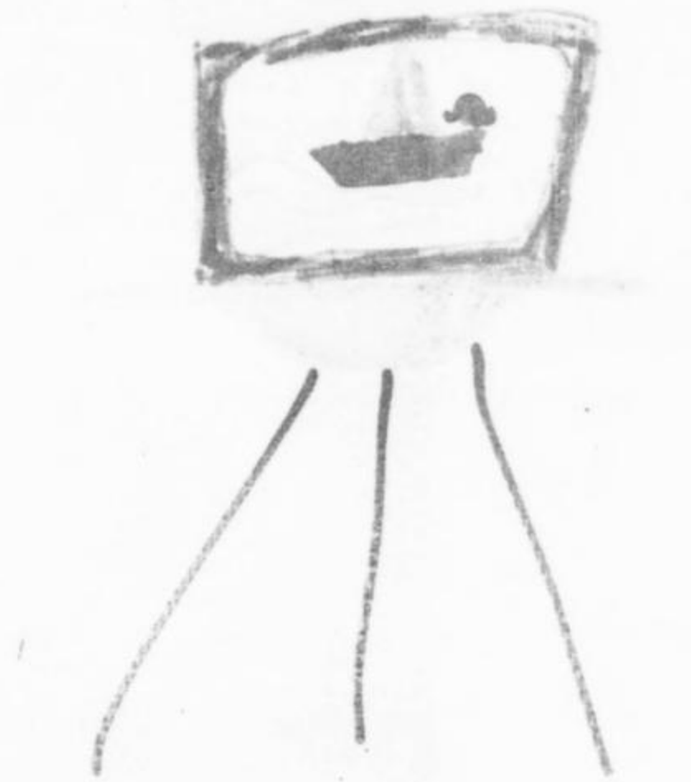
It is important, however, to emphasize that there is much more to the influence of television and to an understanding of its role in child development than can possibly be ascertained by the use of the conventional, and perhaps misleading, research approaches which focus on imitation, modelling, identification, attitude change, and so on.

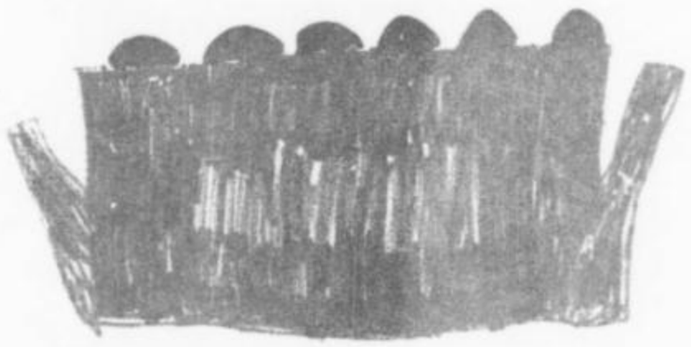
But to question the validity of this research is certainly not to deny the influence of television. On the contrary, it is to demonstrate the complexity and subtlety of a process which could be far more pervasive and influential than many would believe possible. Basically it has more to do with frameworks of interpretation than discrete messages and direct effects.

For example, children are almost bound to be influenced in some way or other by the basic values which underlie so much of what television provides. In most western societies television, particularly when associated with advertising in emphasizing "planned obsolescence", "constructive discontent" or "the ostentatious display of conspicuous consumption" gives the message loud and clear, and the message is that material prosperity is what matters.







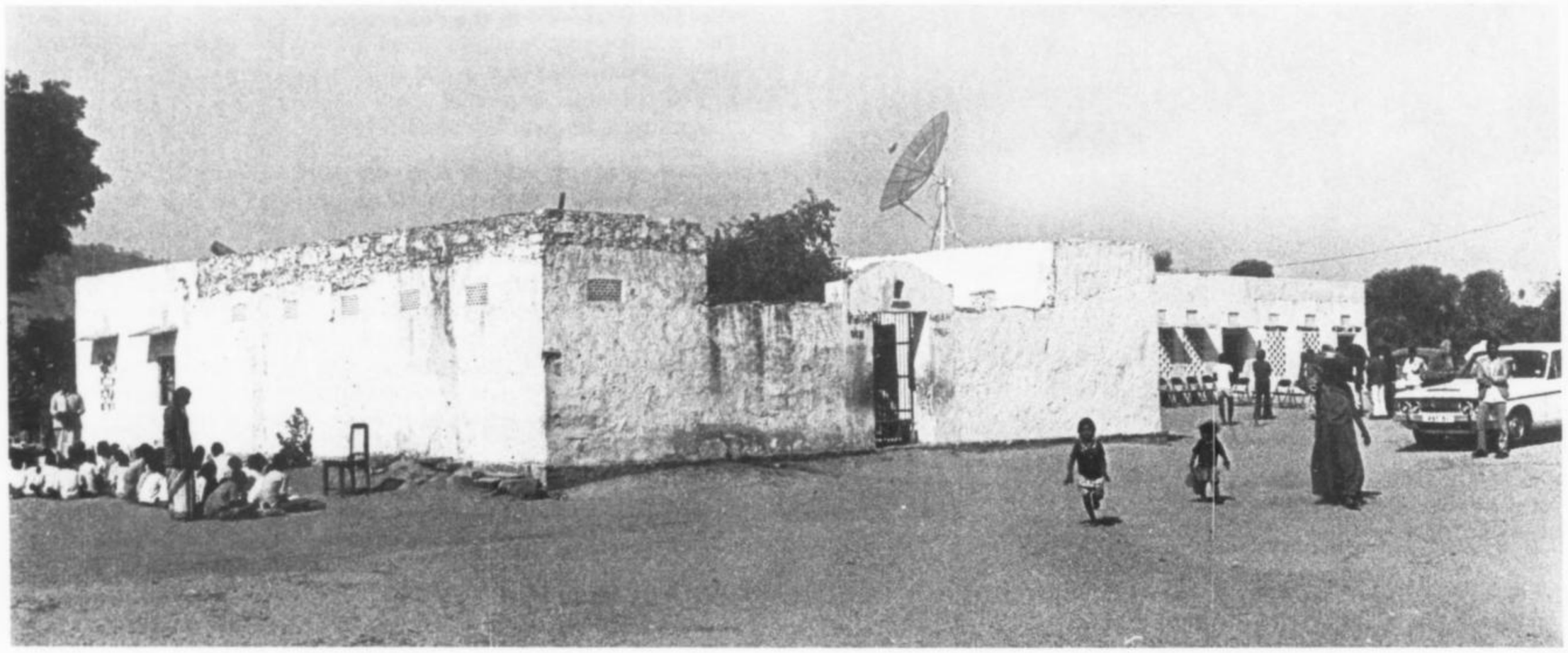


The medium becomes the menu when the TV set dominates the dining table like an electronic guest. Television can play a valuable role in the young child's life, providing information, sparking ideas and dramatizing human feelings. But addictive TV watching may be a mechanism for avoiding discussion of family problems and for eliminating the rituals and pastimes of family life. Left, sketches by two nine-year-old French children who were asked to "draw a television" as part of a study on children and television carried out in the Paris region.

Photo Pierre Berger © Rapho, Paris. Drawings All Rights Reserved

School and community television in India

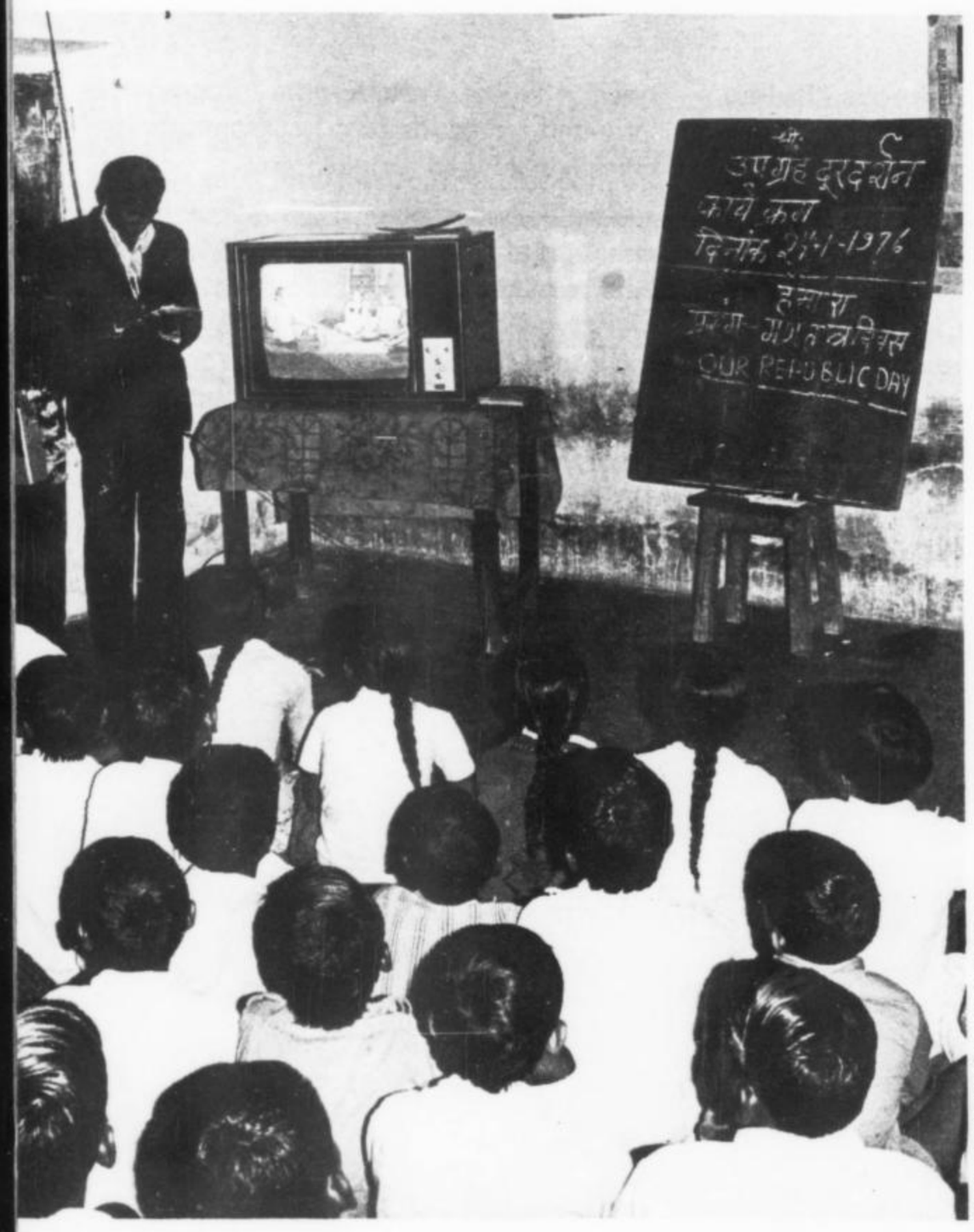
In August 1975 India launched a unique, year-long experiment in TV satellite communication in order to speed the growth of knowledge in its rural areas. During this Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) programmes were beamed via the U.S. ATS-6 satellite to community TV receivers in some 2,400 villages. Below, rooftop antenna in the village of Pilikitilai near Jaipur. Children were the main beneficiaries of SITE, and according to one report the experiment generated so much interest in learning that there was a fall in the number of school drop-outs. Right, educational TV broadcast in a Pilikitilai school. As part of the experiment Unesco helped train programme producers, who often work in consultation with psychologists, educators and social workers. When SITE ended in 1976 the experiment was continued with ground transmitters which brought to rural areas, especially in the Ahmadabad region, programmes on such themes as farming, nutrition and hygiene. Above, adult viewers watch an evening broadcast on the community TV set in a village square. Educational TV in India is broadcast in many languages including Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, Gujerati, Urdu and English. It seeks active participation from children in a variety of entertaining programmes which present music, dance, drama, games, quiz shows, and offer training in handicrafts. Care is taken to respect cultural values and traditions, and the content of advertising is governed by a special code. India, which already has a million TV receivers, is planning to launch its own satellite, INSAT, in 1982, to bring the benefits of educational television to an even wider area of the country.



Material prosperity is undoubtedly the predominant value in western society—a value which is daily promoted by the media. The media pay great attention to the goals and objectives but they have little to say about the legitimate ways of achieving the advocated goals, and there is no doubt that there are many people in most countries who do not have the chance to achieve them legitimately.

By operating in this way television may help in the development of unrealistic expectations, make some people aware of their relative deprivation and lead to frustration, and possibly aggression or deviance. When television programmes with such values are exported to developing countries, the position becomes even more problematic.

The points just made may not appear compatible with the earlier comments about individual selectivity with regard to perception, interpretation, reaction, etc. In this connexion it should first be stressed that when it is said that different children make different use of the media, we are not thinking in terms of a sort of individual anarchy. Children may be grouped together, and groups which have several relevant factors in common (e.g. age, sex, social class, education) may be found to use the media in similar ways.



Photos E. Lloyd Sommerlad-Unesco

Secondly, and more importantly, the children's selections are not unlimited. They are restricted by what is provided by television. Television sets the agenda, and to that degree controls the discourse, usually in a relatively consistent, conformist manner. Children select from television and the other media in an attempt to give meaning to their lives, and these selections will reflect their non-media experiences and general situations.

This is how television becomes an agent in the socialization process—a process which may involve coming to terms, or otherwise dealing with, several sets of values (although one might be predominant) rather than simply conforming (or not conforming) to just one.

In the same way, it can be misleading to talk about television *per se.* Some research indicates that increasingly, over the years, television has come to be regarded as the most used and the most reliable source of information. But it is interesting to note that when questions are asked in research which deal with the different matters covered by television (e.g. music, morals, politics, sport, fashion, etc.) then the use, perceived credibility and influence of television, *vis-à-vis* other sources, vary according to the subject.

Moreover, television varies from country to country, not only in terms of output, but also in terms of its relationship to other institutions. More than simply an electronic medium, television is, above all, a social-political institution and its policy, *modus operandi* and output have to be seen within the appropriate social-political frameworks which it will reflect and reinforce.

If we are looking at the relationship between television and children, then the overall picture will be different in those countries where communication policies and education policies are clearly articulated and closely related from what it will be in those countries where there is no planned relationship between the two, and where the forces of the market-place might predominate, at least as far as television policy and programmes are concerned.

In one case there is a conscious attempt to use both the media and the educational system as part of a deliberate policy to meet needs which have been defined from some value position. In the other, it seems to be assumed (although the problem is rarely couched in this way) that needs (ill-defined) will be best met through the free play of market forces. Both approaches (and there are differences within each) have advantages and disadvantages. It is the latter system, or some version of it, that holds sway in most western societies. Not surprisingly, it is often characterized by internal contradictions with regard to values, policy and practice, not only between television and education, but also between different departments (e.g. education, entertainment, advertising) within the same broadcasting institution.

We need to remember that, although some broadcasting institutions provide excellent educational programmes for children and young people, these programmes are but a drop in the ocean of total output, and frequently represent values which do not appear consistent with those of general output.

The fact that there are different policies with regard to education and television in different countries means, quite obviously, that alternative approaches are available for consideration in any given country. Unfortunately, because of the nature of the relevant social systems, the debate is often polarized into a not very fruitful confrontation between "freedom" and "central control".

There must be something to learn from all systems. Perhaps we could start by questioning the elitist or top-downwards approach to broadcasting which seems to prevail in all countries, irrespective of political climate. We know it is not necessary that television should always take the form of the few talking to the many—often about the position of the many from the standpoint of the few—but it usually does take this form.

We might begin to look for alternative forms. Decisions about media policy are governed by considerations of ideology, political expediency, private profit and the need to maintain existing structures, although needless to say these are usually rationalized in terms of the public good, or the communication needs of society.

Perhaps one of our main tasks in this year of the child should be to cut through these tautologies, test the various claims and try to ascertain precisely what specific needs of children are being met, to what degree and with what consequences, by different broadcasting systems in different parts of the world. We might then be in a position, by drawing on experiences from many countries, to make recommendations about the structures and policies most likely to meet basic needs and, it is to be hoped, to take the appropriate action.

Such an approach to communication, particularly if linked to systematic attempts to educate children in media understanding and appreciation, might also help to foster international understanding, the prime aim of Unesco's policy.

■ **James Halloran**

Mass media: the new Pied Piper

by Kazuhiko Goto

A society is defined as an "information-oriented" society when it places more weight on knowledge and information than on things; and the fact that Japan is on the verge of the era of the information-oriented society has been a matter of discussion in Japan for some time.

In fact, what we really mean when we speak of the information-oriented society is the "mass media information-oriented" society, with all the profound effects on children that this implies. For in addition to the world of nature and of other people, children are now surrounded by an artificial environment created by the mass media.

Japan is certainly one of the most television-oriented societies in the world. Indeed, in Japan it would probably be easier to track down a missing person than to find a child who does not watch television.

It is easy to see why television is such an attractive medium to both children and adults. It is available in the home and we can watch it in comfort whenever we please, it provides easily digested entertainment after a day's work, it enables us to see places and people and their way of life that we would otherwise be unable to see directly, and it is accessible even to viewers with little education or knowledge.

Unfortunately, television takes up our time; to watch it we must sit in front of it, watch as long as a programme lasts, and do nothing else while watching it. This exclusive aspect of television, the fact that it prevents us from doing other things, poses more serious problems than is commonly realized. While television may provide an acceptable form of relaxation for adults after a day's work, it robs children of the time they must have to accumulate a variety of experiences at first hand.

However, not everything that television offers us is desirable. Even when well-intentioned programmes suitable for children are provided, there is no guarantee that these are the only programmes children will watch. In fact, as matters stand now, children watch more programmes intended for adults than programmes specifically designed for children.

One likely outcome of this will be the elimination of the boundary between the subculture of the adult and the child. Children may come into contact with the adult world too soon, while they are at their most vulnerable. Unless the adults in the home fulfil

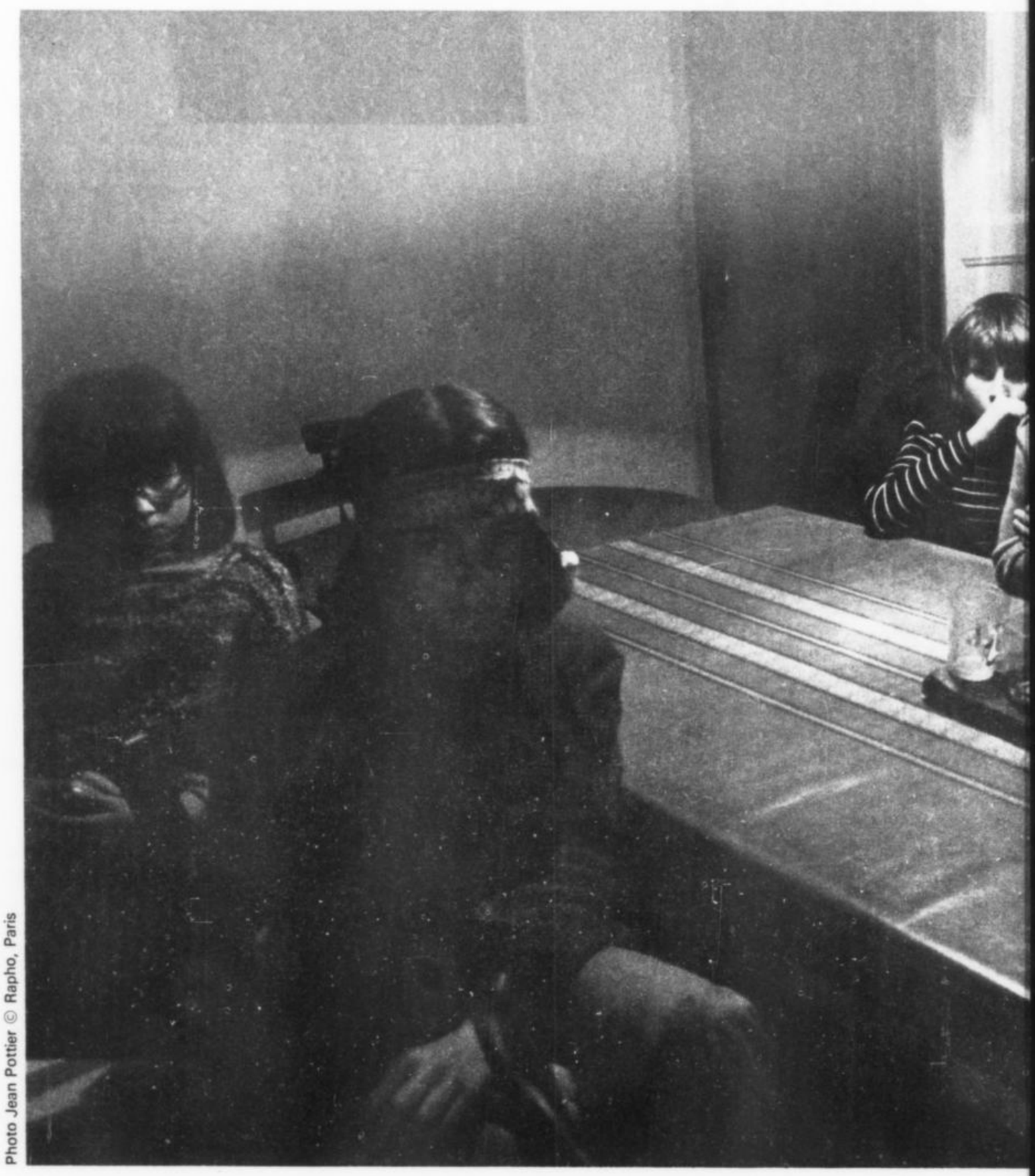


Photo Jean Pottier © Rapho, Paris

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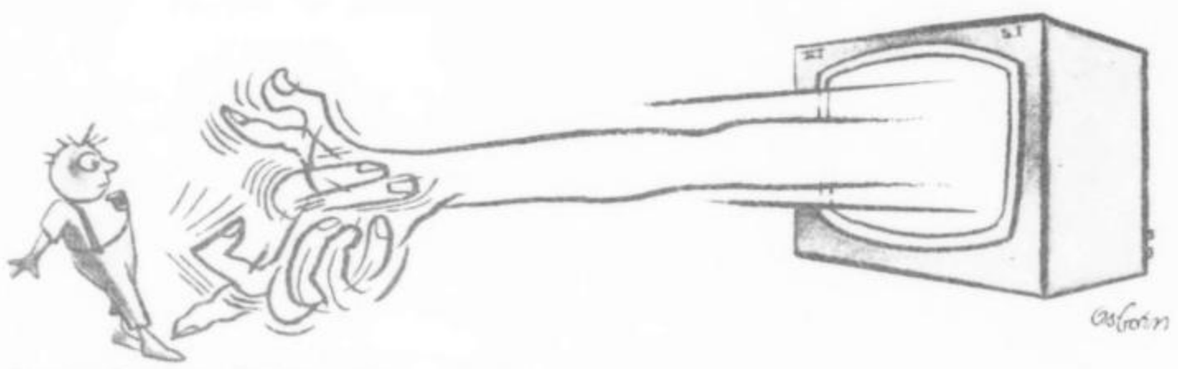

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the role of interpreter and mediator, the children will absorb the view of society, and of adult roles in it, depicted on the screen, rather than the spontaneous, natural view they would otherwise have obtained from the experiences of daily life.

Furthermore, the models of society, of the roles and occupations of men and women in it, that children will learn will be simplified models adapted to meet the programme producer's need to provide entertainment. Inevitably the adult sub-culture of the future will be affected.

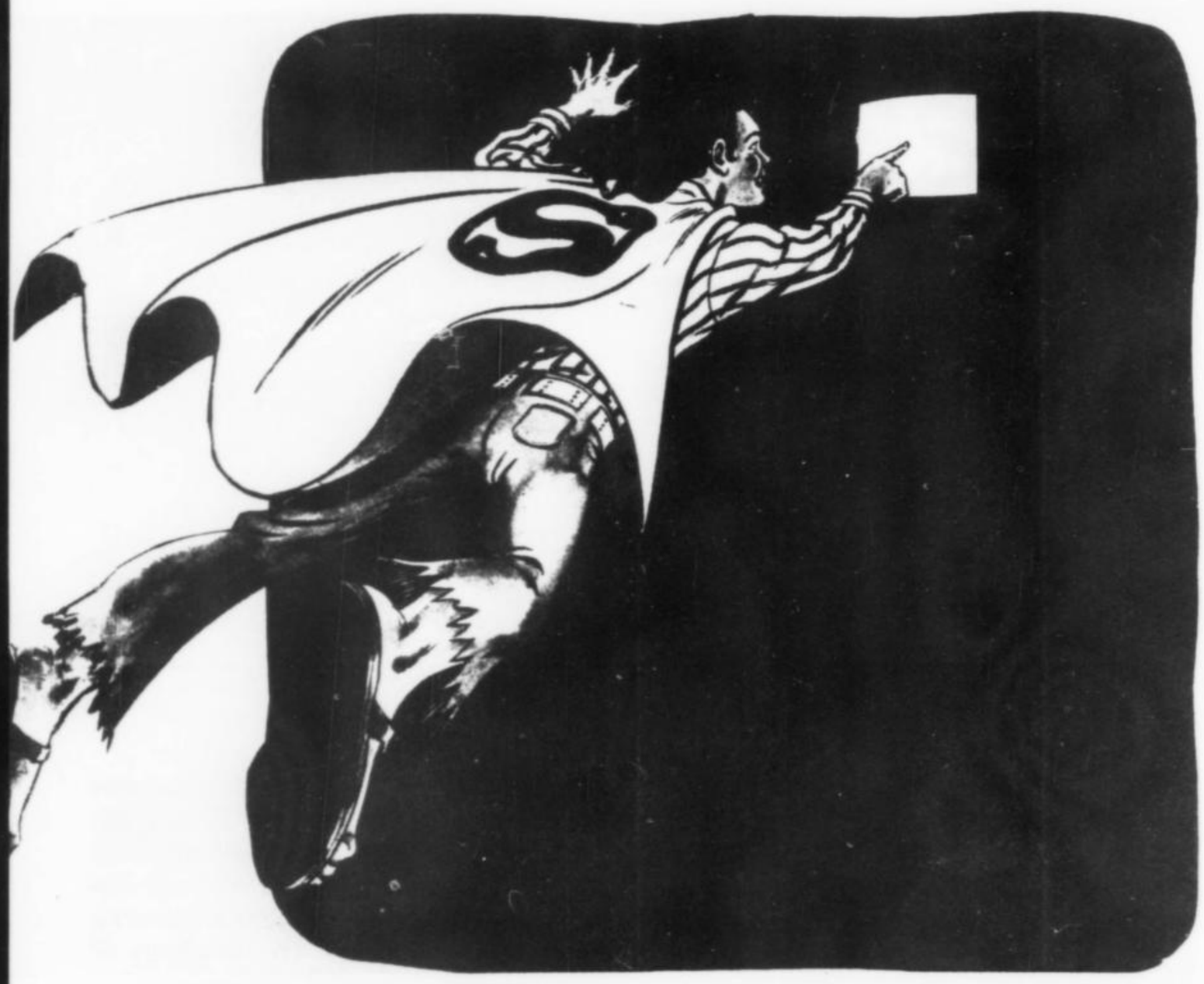
An important but often overlooked feature of television is that the images and sound it provides, though similar to reality, lack the dimension of interaction and response that we experience in direct contact with the real world and offer only one-way communication. For the child, the parent's response and his interaction with the other children and adults around him are crucial to his comprehension of the world and his insertion into society. The tendency of busy, working parents to use television as a surrogate nurse to occupy the children and to keep them quiet has the effect of depriving them of a factor vital to their proper development.

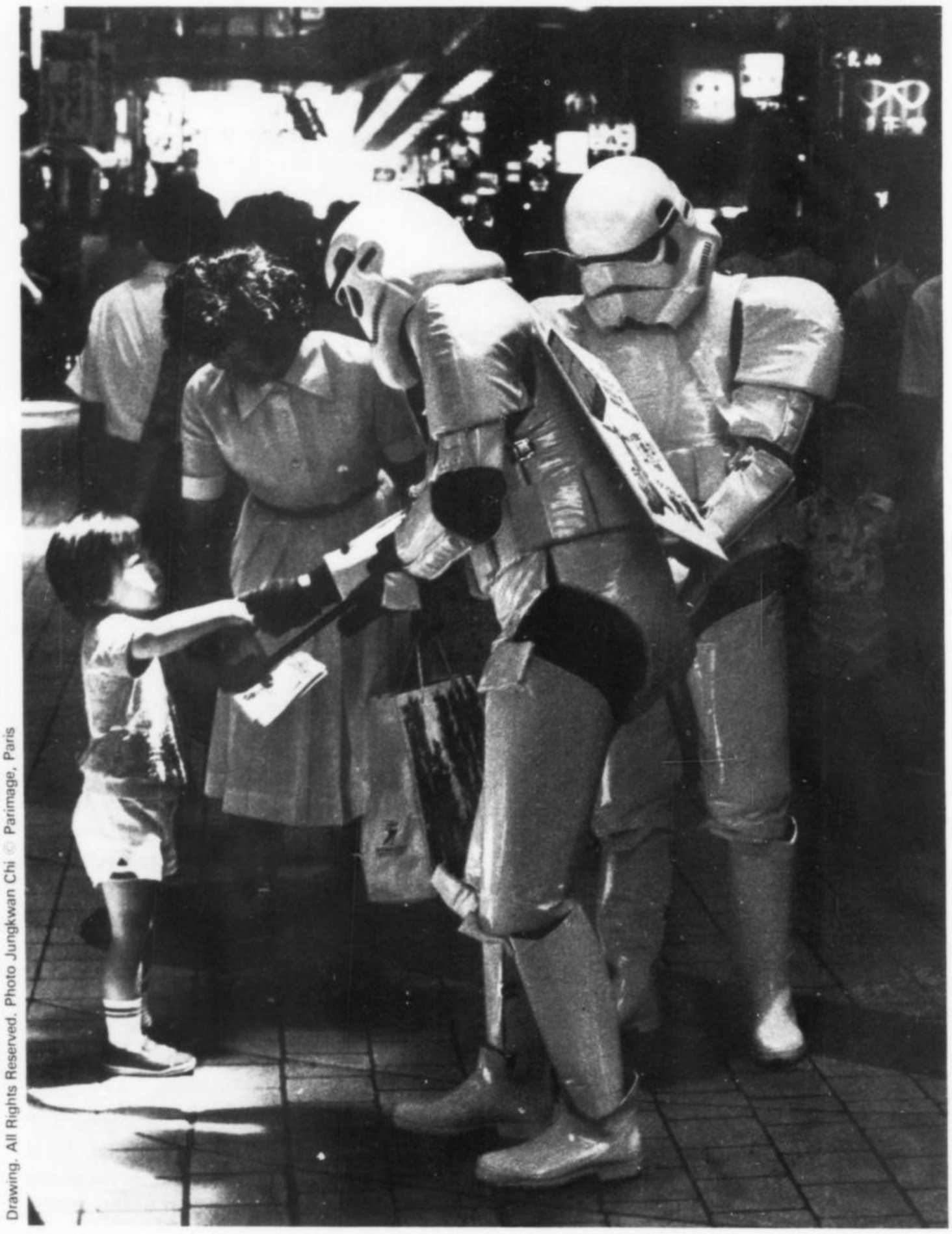
This passive role of the child viewer takes on an additional significance in countries where broadcasting is financed, whether wholly or in part, by income earned from advertising.

Television commercials are exceptionally attractive to children. An advertisement is always "good news". Repeated, slickly produced commercials for attractively displayed goods stress the virtues of the products concerned but never mention their weak points. Children are given the illusion that there is an infinite supply of new goods and services available to all and there is no countervailing incentive for them to control their desire to buy. There is no attempt to teach them to be discriminating consumers. On the contrary, their desire is aroused for essentially unnecessary consumer items, for tempting sweets and snacks and processed foods.

Great though the impact of television commercials is on children, it may well be surpassed by that of the slot-machines to be found in the amusement centres or "games corners" that have sprung up all over Japan. Often the haunt of gangs of juvenile delinquents, these centres even have slot-machines that feature the killing of men. Unlike television programmes which, however bad they may be, eventually come to an end, slot-machines are available for play for just as long as the player's supply of coins lasts.

Even if a child resists the temptations of the street corner amusement centre, he is liable to succumb to the attractions of the many weekly, fortnightly or monthly maga-





Drawing. All Rights Reserved. Photo Jungkwan Chi © Parimage, Paris

zines that are available not only from bookstores, kiosks and news-stands but at drug-stores and supermarkets as well. Most of these are comics containing serialized stories so that once a child begins to read one he wants to read subsequent issues as well. Most of those who fear the effects of these magazines on children concentrate their criticisms on the vulgarity, the violence and the sexual explicitness of their contents. In this respect their effect on children can be compared to that of television programmes of similar content.

More important, perhaps, is their effect on reading habits. This type of magazine has been on the market now for several years and many of those who first read them as children continue to read them now that they are adults. It is probably true to say that the increase in the number of children and adults who do not read conventional books is directly related to the spread of comics and of television.

Television, slot-machines, comics—is there a common link between them? As machines or the product of machines and deriving from industrial activity, they form part of the modern mechanical-electronic environment which tends to diminish or exclude direct, personal communication between people and to arouse and distort human desires and expectations.

If the present trend for both mother and father to work and to be absent from the home all day continues, our children will find themselves more and more the captives of this artificial, indirect, inhuman environment.

■ **Kazuhiko Goto**

Left, when actors dressed in costumes from the American space fantasy film *Star Wars* mingled with shoppers in Kobe (Japan) as part of a publicity campaign for the film, grave-faced tots exchanged handshakes with the galactic strangers. Cinema and TV bring entertainment to millions of children by creating a world of adventure and fantasy. But with youngsters there is a real danger that over-exposure to fictional films and programmes may induce them to blur the distinction between reality and make-believe and even that the simulated world brought to them by the media may become more real than life itself.

Photo © Télérama, Paris

François Truffaut with a young actor during the shooting of his film *Une Belle Fille Comme Moi (A Gorgeous Bird Like Me),* made in 1972.

Children are born actors

by François Truffaut

François Truffaut's film *L'Enfant Sauvage* (1969) is based on the true story of a boy found living wild and abandoned in a forest of southern France in 1798. The child was taken to the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb in Paris, where he was cared for by a doctor, Jean Itard, who set out to educate him, inventing certain methods which are still used today in the education of the deaf and dumb. In the film the role of Itard was played by Truffaut himself, who relied heavily on the doctor's account of the case when preparing the scenario. Below, the "wild child" shortly after being captured by hunters. In a later scene, bottom photo, the boy plays with the glimmerings of candlelight. Thought by many to be ineducable, his intelligence has been awakened by Itard's devoted tutoring.

COMPARED with their importance in everyday life, children are under-represented on the cinema screen. There are, of course, films with children in them, but few films actually *about* children. The reason is simple: there are no child stars today. And since the star system forms the commercial basis of the cinema, children can only be used in films as subsidiary characters, extraneous or marginal to the main course of the action, decorative frills to the plot.

And yet in the old days Hollywood had its child-stars whose adventures the public loved to follow from film to film. But to my mind these productions, though often highly entertaining and of excellent quality, were not of a nature to enrich our under-

Photos © Films du Carrosse, Paris

FRANÇOIS TRUFFAUT, *the French film director, left school at the age of 14 and became in turn shop storeman, office clerk and welder. A cinema-lover from an early age, he became film critic of the magazines* Cahiers du Cinéma *and* Arts *before working as an assistant to Roberto Rossellini. In 1959, his first feature-length film,* Les Quatre Cents Coups *(The 400 Blows), won the prize for best direction at the Cannes Festival. His other well-known films include:* Fahrenheit 451 *(1966),* Baisers Volés *(Stolen Kisses, 1968) and* L'Enfant Sauvage *(The Wild Child, 1970). He is the author of several books including:* Le Cinéma selon Alfred Hitchcock *(The Cinema According to Alfred Hitchcock), published by Seghers, Paris, in 1975.*

standing of children and may even have given film-goers a false idea of childhood. They usually travestied the truth, ramming a diet of optimism down the throat of a mainly youthful public.

Some film scenarios play false to children, who are cheated out of their due by something or other, an animal, say, or an object, which is considered intrinsically poetic. Since children automatically bring poetry with them wherever they appear, I feel that film-makers should not deliberately introduce a poetic note into films about children. The poetry should emerge spontaneously; it should not be a means to an end nor should it be an end in itself.

Let me give a concrete example of what I mean. I find more poetry in a sequence showing a child wiping the dishes than in one showing the same child in velveteen picking flowers in a garden to a soundtrack of music by Mozart.

It should never be forgotten that the public expect children to play on their heartstrings. Consequently, it is difficult to avoid coyness when making a film about children. The only solution is a deliberate, calculated hardening of the heart when deciding on how to treat the subject; this does not mean that the film will lose any of its impact.

A child smiles on the screen, and lo and behold you've got the audience in your pocket. But in real life the most striking thing is that children are serious when adults are futile. This is why I believe that a higher level of truth can be achieved by filming not only children's games but also their dramas which are huge and have nothing to do with adult conflicts.

The adult world as seen by children is one where nothing is punished; anything goes. A father laughs as he tells his friends how he smashed his car against a tree; but if his eight-year-old son accidentally drops a bottle while trying to help out at home he will think he has committed a crime, for a child makes no distinction between an accident and a misdemeanour.

An incident of this kind can produce a dramatic situation on the screen: a film about children can be made from seemingly insignificant events, for the truth of the matter is that nothing to do with childhood is insignificant.

The adult cinema-goer sees childhood as linked to the idea of innocence and above all to the idea of purity; an adult who becomes emotional when he sees a child on the screen is actually indulging in self-pity and mourning his own lost "innocence". So it is essential to be realistic : and what is realism but a refusal to peddle either pessimism or optimism. Let the viewer make up his own mind without taking his cue from the director!

In my opinion the most fascinating age, and the one which offers the most cinematographic possibilities, is that between eight and fifteen, the age of awakening consciousness.

For parents, everything before adolescence, and even the word *adolescent* itself, is of little significance. For mum and dad you are a child until you do your military service, which makes a man of you... or so they seem to think.

And yet adolescence brings with it the discovery of injustice and the desire for independence. The adolescent's affections are weaned away from his or her parents ; sexual curiosity begins to stir. Adolescence is a hyper-critical age which sees the first conflicts between the absolute morality of childhood and the relative morality of adulthood, between purity of heart and the impurity of life. In a word, it is the most interesting age for any artist to spotlight.

I know that most people take a poor view of those who get children to act on stage or screen. For myself, I reject out of hand the view that children's personalities suffer serious damage when they become actors. This is far from the truth. And in France at least the employment of child actors is today strictly controlled by law. A committee goes through the scenario with a toothcomb; the child is medically examined; the head teacher of his or her school is consulted; the case is submitted to the local authorities. The parents receive only twenty per cent of the fee, the remainder being put in a savings bank account for the child. If the film is shot during term-time, a teacher must supervise the child's education.

Adolescent actors contribute to a film an extraordinary purity of which professionals are not always capable. If something in the action or dialogue is ridiculous they sense it immediately and make no bones about saying so. The director must be sufficiently modest and flexible to make use of their frankness and realism and modify various details of his film accordingly, adapting the character to the young actor rather than artificially forcing the young actor to fit in with the character. A children's film must be made with the collaboration of the children themselves, for they have an infallible nose for truth in natural, uncontrived situations. In a classroom scene, for example, they know that the sound of pens scraping in inkwells is all-important.

Unlike professional actors children have no technical gimmicks; they do not try to hog the camera; they do not know whether they have one profile better than another; they are always honest where feelings are concerned. This may seem curious, but everything a child does on the screen he seems to be doing for the first time.

Film which records the transformation of young faces is doubly precious because of the tension between each action and its wider symbolic significance.

This is why, for twenty years now, I have never wearied of making films with children and why I shall make more films about them in the years to come.

■ **François Truffaut**

Scene from Charlie Chaplin's film *The Kid* (USA, 1921).

***Los Olvidados (The Young and Damned)* directed by Luis Bunuel (Mexico, 1949).**

Photos © Cinémathèque Française, Paris

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris

African childhood

by Camara Laye

CAMARA LAYE, *Guinean writer, attended the Koranic school and, later, the French primary school at Kouroussa, northern Guinea. Coming to France, he continued his studies in Paris while, at the same time, working in a factory. When Guinea achieved independence, in 1958, he returned to his country where he assumed important administrative functions. Since 1965, he has lived in Senegal. He is the author of* L'Enfant Noir *(The Black Child), published by Plon, Paris, in 1953, in which he recounts his African childhood, and of two novels,* Le Regard du Roi *(The King's Regard), Plon, 1954, and* Dramouss, *Plon, 1966.*

KOUROUSSA in Guinea, West Africa, my birthplace and the traditional home of my forebears, is a typical Malinke village; the Djeliba River which flows past it dominates the life of its mainly agricultural population. Kouroussa is situated some seven hundred kilometres from the coast and is reached by train or automobile.

In my childhood, Kouroussa was a cluster of round *banco* (clay-walled) huts topped by conical, thatched roofs. The village housed various *kapila,* or extended families, bound together by a love that welded them into united, close-knit groups.

From my studies of the oral tradition of West Africa, undertaken over the past twenty years, I know today that Tabon Wana Fran Camara was an ancestor of mine. He was a contemporary of Tira Maghan Traore, the great general of Manden, of Do Samo Conde, king of Sosso, of Fakoli Koroma, leader of the Koromas, of Famandjan, king of Sibi, of Sundiata Keita,

emperor of Mali in the thirteenth century. The original Mandingo were a people formed of a confederation of the different tribes which constituted the basis of the Malian empire.

According to our elders, the snake spirit of our race belonged first to Fran Camara and made him a skilled and respected craftsman. As a child I was taken by my father to see the snake spirit whom I got to know very well. The source of my father's skill in the shaping of wood and the working of metal, the snake spirit was also his trusted adviser in the art of controlling his colleagues.

In those days men protected themselves with all manner of *greegrees* (charms); it was a time of revealers of things hidden, and of healers, some of whom really could heal.

A child in Kouroussa did not belong to his parents but to his lineage group which was responsible for him and took care of his education. The individual remained linked to the group which was held to have given him life, and it was within the group that he continued to live.

This solidarity, or rather this source of life, made itself felt on important occasions. Every birth was attended by the whole village. As soon as the cries of the woman in labour were heard, all the old women rushed to her aid, while the elders gathered in the shade of the great bombax tree in the centre of the village and anxiously awaited the announcement of the birth. When the infant arrived, the father made the rounds to thank the villagers, for the child had been born thanks to the efforts of all. Throughout the day, all the villagers in turn visited the woman in childbed to thank her for having given them a baby.

Should a villager fall ill, the men and women would visit the sufferer on the way to work in the fields in the morning and again on their return in the evening. But it was above all at the time of a death that the solidarity of Kouroussa was seen at its best. Work was abandoned so that everyone could lavish attention on the one who was dying and on his or her family.

Today, many of the ancient customs are unsuited to the modern age and have had to be abandoned. But the solidarity arising from these exchanges created a current of sympathy and was a positive aspect of traditional society. Solidarity was a vital force that existed in all African villages.

There were many customs like these which astound our children when we speak of them today and which will astound our grandchildren even more. Many things which were commonplace in Africa's past were a source of astonishment to Europeans. Yet the Europe of long ago had its own mysteries which, though different from ours, could have helped to ensure European acceptance of our mysteries.

Did all these things of which I have written really exist? Why should this be doubted? Is the world no more than what a cursory glance around us reveals?

In the past, the face, the figure or the animal that took shape from the wood in our sculptors' hands and the varied output of our sculptor-blacksmiths were imbued with mystery and were designed for use in worship and magic. It was a time when the sculptor-blacksmith was not merely a craftsman, but a sorcerer, a priest in constant contact with fire, which he used first to melt the ore and then to breathe shape into the metal. It was a time when the hoe was not merely a tool for turning the soil, but an instrument which controlled the earth and the harvest.

This was a time when the art of the blacksmith ranked above all others. It was a truly noble art which required more knowledge and skill than any other. In our society the smith was probably the first specialized craftsman; the knowledge he had to possess, the operations that had to be gone through to transform the ore into a weapon or an agricultural implement made specialization essential.

Once his special skill was recognized, it was natural for people to turn to the blacksmith when they wanted something carved in wood. Not, of course, for the ordinary utensil that anyone could rough out, but for likenesses of ancestors and for the most ancient images of all—totems and the masks for ritual dances, indeed, all the cult objects his skills enabled him to produce. And though these skills have never been completely lost, they have, inevitably, become rarer in a society whose ancient animism has been confronted with new ideas.

This is not to say that mystery is no more, but simply that it is to be found elsewhere—it has emigrated. I became aware of this in 1956 when, on returning to Africa for good, I visited a Malinke craftsman in Kouroussa. I still recall my amaze-

Photo © Giraudon, Paris - Musée de l'Homme, Paris

ment and my efforts to guess what would emerge from the shapeless block under the sharp, precise blows of the chisel. Yet there was no mystery; only the wonder of the head of a doe emerging unexpectedly from the wood. Suddenly, I knew exactly what was coming into being. It was not a very mysterious mystery. It was the answer to a riddle I had asked myself. But what of the craftsman? What was he seeking as he carved and shaped the wood?

He was looking for his own reality; he sought to be true, as true as a man can be. He had produced the most beautiful of heads, an idealized head that epitomized every doe.

Today, African sculpture is on display in the world's leading museums and, more than African literature whether expressed in English or in French, it reveals the extraordinary power and sympathy rooted in the African soul.

Although it has not yet found its definitive place in the history of art, the influence of this African sculpture swept through the art world with the force of a tidal wave. Yesterday's painters, who are still the great painters of today, were obsessed with the new plastic forms this sculpture provided. These were the forms they seized upon and experimented with, for they lent themselves to all sorts of new styles and combinations.

The discovery of our sculpture did not, however, endow them with any greater spirituality. When we look back over the past sixty years and examine the styles of that period and those of today, almost the only difference we can detect is an increased formalism, no better and no worse than what had gone before.

When I attended the French primary school at Kouroussa, in 1940 and 1941, when classes were over for the day, I often liked to visit a craftsman in his workshop and watch him as he set to work carving a piece of wood. It all seemed so strange to me at the time and it has taken me years to understand that, whereas in the West the artist was considered to be a giant among men, in Africa the artist, the *djeli* or *griot,* the poet, the *belentigui,* or master of the word, the *noumou,* or blacksmith, the *siaki,* or goldsmith, were always held to be people of lesser importance than the ordinary man. That is why they felt more intensely than other men the weight of their presence in the world.

Thus, curiously, the sculptor of the past, placed before reality, did not copy it, he transformed it. And at times he transformed it so much that he introduced a measure of abstraction. By this, of course, I do not mean abstraction to the point of confusion, but a non-systematic abstraction which therefore is unrelated to what Europe currently calls abstract painting or sculpture; I mean an abstraction which remains rather unusual in African art and which is more a form of expressionism stretched to its not clearly perceived limit.

Bent over the block of wood he was fashioning with his adze, the craftsman of the past did not calculatedly set out to transform reality; he allowed his heart to express itself with greater spontaneity, and this led first of all to transformations which brought out and accentuated expression and spirituality. This later entailed other purely plastic transformations intended to balance the early ones and to complete them.

But, it may be asked, if these transformations were not gratuitous, were not simply stylistic, how is it that they appear in all their mastery in all African sculpture? Why do these planes and volumes make us think of variations on a given theme? Why is the rhythm here more striking, infinitely more so, than in any other sculpture?

Here we are reaching down into the profundities of the African soul—the feeling for rhythm that enables us, untaught, to play the tom-tom, that means that not one of us, from Senegal to Zaire, can hear the beat of a tom-tom without wanting to dance, that makes us born musicians and born dancers.

What was achieved by the artists of the past in negro-African sculpture can be attempted and achieved in African literature, in both the French and English idioms. When I write, I too am seeking the frenzied rhythm of the African tom-tom.

■ **Camara Laye**

Photo © Dominique Darbois, Paris

Above, musician of the Bassari people (Republic of Guinea). Opposite page, mask from the Guinean region of Nzerekoré. "Here (in Africa) everything is on a familiar footing and there is no break in the fabric of history," writes the Togolese sociologist F. N'Sougan Agblemagnon, evoking the harmony of traditional ways of life in Africa. "The ancestors are close to the children, the dead and the living are side by side, animals and men alike participate in the same mystery. All form part of a single whole which is Nature... People must live in the world of Nature, coordinating their rhythms with those of Nature. This is a form of happiness which African children learn in their earliest years."

Young people speak out

"I had to leave school because we didn't have enough to eat. And I have no clothes to go in. If I could write my name I would be happy. We don't have education. That is why we are so poor."
Durgia (12), India

"I would like to be immortal so long as I could do something scientific. I think that one day men will achieve immortality, but God will have to give us a hand."
Hervé (9), France

★ ★ ★

"I would have to learn how to behave with people who were already dead; it would be like being a new member of a club."
Ana (10), Brazil

The Hervé and Ana quotes are taken from Les Enfants, la Mort et son Image, *(1978) a doctoral thesis by Bernard Martin, Tours, France.*

"I want children because I want love and company and I want to be called 'Mother' and 'Grandmother'. But it will be easier to buy books and clothes with only two children. We are too many in the world now."
Florence (14), Ghana

Photo © Michel Waxmann, Paris

"I've put my name up everywhere; there's no place I can go without coming across it. Sometimes, on Sundays, I go to the subway station at the corner of 7th Avenue and 86th Street and I stay there all day long just watching my name go by."
Young New Yorker

The Young New Yorker quote is taken from The Faith of Graffiti *(1974) by Mervyn Kurlansky and Jon Naar, Praeger, New York.*

"At school we used tribal language. When we moved to Nairobi my English is not enough for school. I am sad because I used to do well and now you can see that I am not a person who is educated."
Fibi (15), Kenya

"We don't learn much at school about things that we do on the farm. I think it would be more useful if we did learn about cattle and about the kinds of work that we will have to do."
Uubia (14), Colombia

"I want children to do what I do for my mother. I wash utensils and clothes and clean house. I make evening chapaties. I keep and wash younger children. I fetch wood. Also water. I help carry to market and weed land."
Lakshmi (13), India

"I have a lot of responsibility. I look after my two sisters and two brothers all week while Mum and Dad are working. They only come at weekends. Dad leaves us 100 pesos ($12) for expenses. I'm responsible for all of us then. I make all the decisions."
Carolyn (13), Philippines

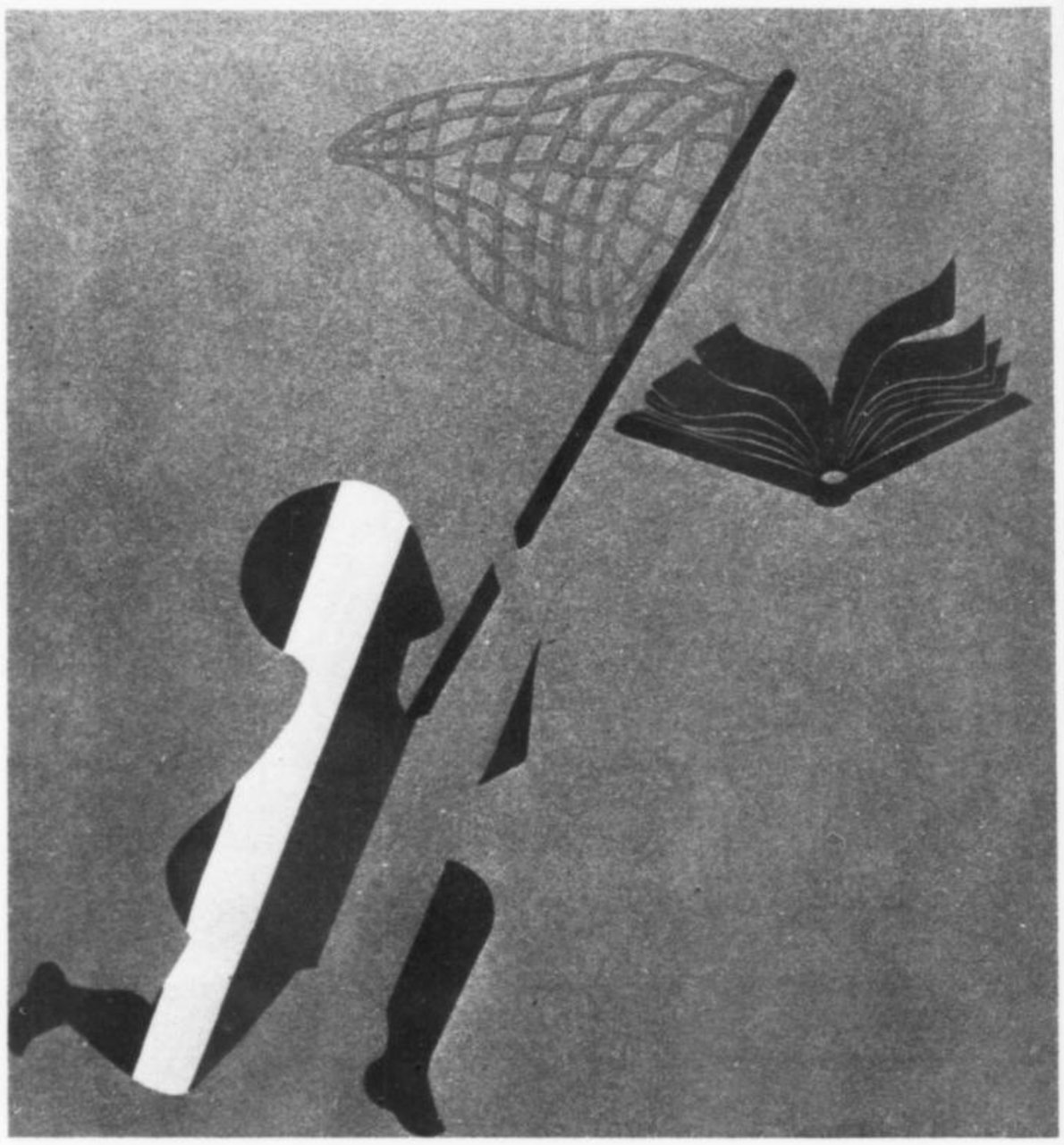
"I think all girls should be treated the same as boys. I don't like dolls, for example. When I get something like a doll's hair-dryer all I like doing is taking the bottom off and getting the batteries out and things like that."
Sophie (10),
United Kingdom

"Lots of adults don't know how to talk to kids. They think all kids are the same whether they're eleven or five years old. Adults don't know how to relate to them because they're so separate."
David (11), Canada

Unless otherwise indicated, the photos and quotations on these two pages were compiled for the Secretariat of the International Year of the Child by New Internationalist Publications, Oxford, United Kingdom.

Children's books in an audio-visual age

by Marc Soriano



Drawing Aysha Aziz Khan © International Institute of Human Rights, Strasbourg

As elusive a quarry as the butterfly? Among the flood of children's books and periodicals being produced today, how many communicate to children an awareness of humanitarian values, of their own rights and the rights of others? This design was drawn by the Pakistani artist Aysha Aziz Khan for an International Poster Competition on the Right to Education, held as part of the 7th International Film Festival on Human Rights at Strasbourg (France) in November 1978.

THE invention of printing and the large-scale production of printed books sparked off one of the greatest revolutions in communications since the invention of writing. The creation of a mass audience through the spread of the printed word forced writers, artists and thinkers to express their ideas as clearly as possible and to aim for greater universality and greater objectivity.

From the seventeenth to the eighteenth century the printed word created a great pool of informed people, specializing in critical reflection, who, by their contributions to literature, the arts and the sciences, helped in a certain way to raise the level of awareness of the masses. In Western Europe, the struggle for the rights of man and democratization in general may be seen, as early as the late eighteenth century, and even more clearly at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to have been linked with the spread of literacy.

Nowhere has faith in the written word been expressed more clearly—that is to say, more naïvely—than in children's literature. Certainly in the nineteenth century, the period when children's literature emerged in most West European countries as a specific literary form, the idea gained ground very quickly that adults were not particularly receptive to education, and that it was more worthwhile writing for children, who were more malleable.

MARC SORIANO *is professor of modern French literature at the University of Paris (VII) and of the methodology of the social sciences at the* Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales. *He has specialized in interdisciplinary research in the social sciences on the basis of special-purpose types of literature, teaching with audio-visual media and the teaching of reading. He is the author of a number of books including:* Les Contes de Perrault, Culture Savante et Traditions Populaires, *Gallimard, 1968, and* Guide de la Littérature pour la Jeunesse, *Flammarion, 1959. This article is taken from a longer study by Marc Soriano,* Children's Books and Human Rights, *published in Unesco's education quarterly* Prospects, *Volume VII, no. 2, 1977.*

This ideological concern, coupled with a desire to exercise effective influence, was the hallmark of all those who were to take an interest in children's books. Publishers and writers all seemed to be seeking an ideal text, a work of fiction appealing to parents as well as to children, offering information as well as entertainment and fostering an awareness of their country, their traditions, their rights and their duties.

But this expectation of salvation through the printed word and literacy was soon to be disappointed : although literacy made headway and books came to occupy a place of importance, there was no corresponding improvement in the recognition of human rights. Another unexpected twist occurred with the introduction of new means of expression and communication, the audio-visual media, which, while presenting information more cheaply, seem to encourage audience passivity, and actually to conflict with the printed word, thus contributing to a certain decline in literacy.

In Western Europe, the production of children's books has become concentrated in the hands of a limited number of publishers. A craft industry in the nineteenth century, it is now governed essentially by the law of maximization of profit, the child's interests being only one of many factors to be taken into consideration in "market research" based largely on the exploitation of existing tastes. The result is a market inundated with mass-produced, stereotyped products which concentrate on entertainment and whose educational value is slight or questionable.

Pitted against the publishing giants are a number of smaller companies, often inspired by advanced educational ideas or ideological, political or religious considerations. Their products are interesting, often of very high standard, but their appeal is limited by the efforts which they require of the readers. In this sphere, as in others, bad money drives out good. Formula-produced fiction based entirely on suspense makes the public even more passive and thus encourages it to turn to the audio-visual media, which, it

must be remembered, offer immediate gratification, whereas the pleasures of reading require a long apprenticeship.

At the same time, intermediate forms of expression are developing, half text and half picture, the comic-strip or photo-strip story. As a result of this process which is going on under our eyes, the very meaning of the word "book" is changing from the sense which it has had for centuries into the sense it already has for millions of children and young people: a series of connected and systematically organized images, framed and centred as in the cinema, in which the bubble-enclosed text, although expressive, represents only a very small proportion of the total message.

What, then, remains of the great expectations which our forbears and even our parents' generation entertained of books and literacy? Is it possible or reasonable, in this last quarter of the twentieth century, to expect books (or series of books) to inculcate humanitarian values in children? Do such books already exist or have they still to be written? What should be the target age group or groups? Should they be "all-purpose" books, suitable for different cultures and the different levels of development of the various countries, or differentiated to meet different requirements? How should they be distributed? Through a private, national or international organization? Although these are very broad questions, they are neither gratuitous nor abstract.

Perhaps the type of book which we describe no longer exists, but it did exist once. At various times and in various countries, works have been published which were very closely in keeping with the needs of the children for whom they were intended and gave them not only pleasure but also a clearer awareness of their rights and those of others. *Cuore* by De Amicis, for example, has perhaps dated, but in 1886 it gave an exceptionally warm-hearted insight into socialist thinking. The same is true of Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn,* which, even today, represents a worthwhile attempt to escape from racist patterns of thinking.

But before we go any further, what is a children's book exactly? A children's book is a message, a historical communication between an adult in a given society and its intended recipient—a child belonging to the same society and who, by definition to some extent, has not yet acquired the knowledge, experience of life and emotional maturity which are the signs of adulthood.

The importance of the historical context

For communication to take place, what is needed—in fact all that is needed—is for the sender and receiver of the message to share a common code, and for this code to relate to the historical context. It is therefore quite impossible to disregard real situations which affect not only the speaker but also the hearer. This analysis helps us to avoid the mistake of thinking that the problem is our own invention.

In fact, the adult has always tried to establish communication with the children of his society, even before the invention of printing or indeed of writing, in order to pass on to them his understanding of rights and duties. Before it took the forms with which we are familiar, this message used other channels of communication, for example the oral tradition, or dances and games.

In seeking to formulate a new message—a book which really accomplishes what it sets out to do—we have nothing to gain by setting it in a limbo outside time and place, since the children for whom it is intended will exist in a particular time and place. It would, on the contrary, be helpful to situate it within a tradition, so that it can draw upon that tradition and so that any new message it contains may be more clearly distinguished against that familiar background.

This rules out the illusory idea of a single book, effective in any country and at any period of time. The structure of our bodies and

This drawing by the artist Ba Kyi illustrates "The Four Puppets", a Burmese story which appears in the third volume of *Folk Tales from Asia for Children Everywhere,* published by the Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco in collaboration with the Tokyo Book Development Centre. The same book also contains folk tales from Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. The stories were selected in consultation with Unesco Member States in Asia. Children's books published by the Centre have today been translated into 19 Asian languages.

Drawing Ba Kyi © Asian Cultural Centre for Unesco, Tokyo Book Development Centre, Tokyo

minds is doubtless universal, which means, in Sartre's fine phrase, that *"tout homme me vaut";* but from birth onwards every individual has been continually worked on and altered by his personal history and that of his country.

Every man is like every other man, but yet develops into an individual unlike any other, belonging to a group, large or small, with its own specific needs. The battles have yet to be fought and won for reason and consciousness to become universal.

We should not allow ourselves to be misled by the very complex case of the "classics", which, in the last analysis, create their own public. These works are usually firmly rooted in a local soil and, by reason of their very specificity, make the young reader curious to discover his own roots or to find new ones.

The type of book for which we are looking must emerge and establish itself in the educational environment with which the child is familiar. The best potential authors of this type of book should be sought not in the artificial milieu of the "general without soldiers" (educational theorists, all-purpose "experts" who always find the right solution to fit any situation) but among the teachers, research-workers and artists of each country who are the only people really familiar with their national traditions and aware of the power of persuasion which they still wield.

Careful analysis of specific historical contexts teaches us not to minimize or to exaggerate the influence of the printed word. Does it—indeed can it—serve the cause of human rights as long as the real power is in the hands of certain strata who do not stand to gain if other men exercise their rights?

There is a strong temptation for anti-democratic authorities to use the audio-visual media not to give effective information and to stimulate critical and political awareness, but to "depoliticize" problems and to deny the existence of the social sciences, which amounts to encouraging audience passivity and systematically "disinforming" the public in order to maintain the status quo.

It is thus impossible to study the influence of books in isolation from the historical situation in which they are produced and distributed: reading habits, the structure of publishing houses and libraries, educational legislation, actual school attendance rates, the nature of production relationships, of the State, etc.

One should not, therefore, rely on books, nor even on literacy, to inculcate in men an awareness of their rights, much less the will to defend them. To attribute to books the almost exclusive power to inculcate human rights is implicitly to endorse a number of erroneous assumptions.

The first concerns the reading process itself. The fact that some people can read does not necessarily mean that we know how one learns to read. There are several levels of reading ability and progress from one level to the next is achieved only by long practice.

To be able to read is not to be able to spell out letters of syllables or to have mastered the skill of silent reading, or even to be able to switch from one sense to another, picking out key works by rapid and creative anticipation—i.e. it is not only the ability to read rapidly and "identify" with the reading-matter, but also and above all the ability continually to vary one's pace and to adopt a critical attitude to what is being read.

To place undue reliance on literacy and books, in our historical context, is to forget that our system of education (due to the inadequacies of our teaching methods and the forces working against critical inquiry) turns out large numbers of non-readers or poor readers; it is also to forget the crucial factor of the relapse into illiteracy, what Albert Meister calls *"l'analphabétisation de retour"* (the illiteracy backlash). This phenomenon does not only occur in developing countries and countries which are economically underdeveloped, where the mother tongue tends to conflict with the official language required for "getting ahead". It is much more general. We know more or less how to teach the skill of reading, but not the pleasure of reading, which is why a good third of the "school population", after spending ten years of its life learning how to read, spends the rest of its life forgetting.

Unless the reading habit is made an integral part of the reader's personality, it is not to be relied on as a means of spreading awareness of human rights, for this requires an active rather than a passive attitude on the part of those concerned, whether children or semi-literate adults.

Another mistaken assumption involved in undue reliance on books is that human rights can then only be preached to those old

CONTINUED PAGE 24

Lines of communication

"It would appear that the book is a successor to the 'transitional object'," writes Marc Soriano (see page 24). The term "transitional object" is used by the British paediatrician and psychoanalyst D.W. Winnicott to describe an object "that becomes vitally important to the infant for use at the time of going to sleep, and is a defence against anxiety". This object, which never changes, exists in the intermediate territory between "inner psychic reality" and the external world and "gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity".

As the child grows up, the transitional object "fades away" and the whole subject of transitional phenomena becomes diffused and "widens out into that of play, and of artistic creativity and appreciation, of religious feeling and of dreaming, and also of fetishism, lying and stealing, etc."

Winnicott, who died in 1971, attached great importance to play which, he believed, could perform a major role in psychiatric therapy. He liked to encourage the children who were brought to him for consultation to play what he called the "squiggle game" with him. "In this game," he wrote, "I make some kind of impulsive line-drawing and invite the child to turn it into something, and then he makes a squiggle for me to turn into something in my turn".

For Winnicott the squiggle game was a means of creating a situation in which the child and the therapist became aware of a critical problem with which the child was grappling and which was preventing his development.

Reproduced on the opposite page are nine of sixteen drawings executed during one of Winnicott's consultations with an eight-year-old girl named Ruth. Ruth had two sisters, one older and one younger than herself, and united parents. She had been pampered as a small child, and began to steal when her mother became pregnant for the third time. Her mother had been ill several times. Unknown to Ruth, Winnicott knew all this.

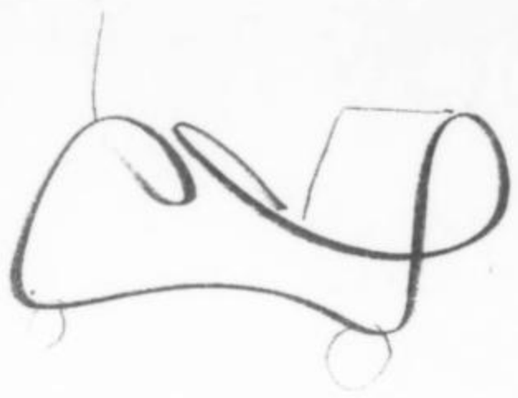
During the consultation Ruth soon began to feel at ease. She talked about her sisters and agreed to play the squiggle game. Winnicott drew a squiggle which she immediately transformed into a baby carriage, her own baby carriage which she had had for a year (1).

Next Winnicott turned a drawing by Ruth into a plant. Then the girl drew her three dolls, described them to Winnicott and told him their names. She said that she would rather be a mother than a father and that she would like to have as many children as possible. In this way she gave the doctor an image of her own family.

Ruth turned Winnicott's next squiggle into "a person" (2). Then the girl drew another squiggle. When she had finished it, she suddenly said "Oh! I know!" and transformed it herself into a bow and arrow (3).

Ruth made a butterfly out of another of Winnicott's squiggles (4). Then she described how her garden had been spoiled by a man who had built lavatories in it.

The game went on with Winnicott changing a squiggle by Ruth into an animal which she said looked like a giraffe (5).



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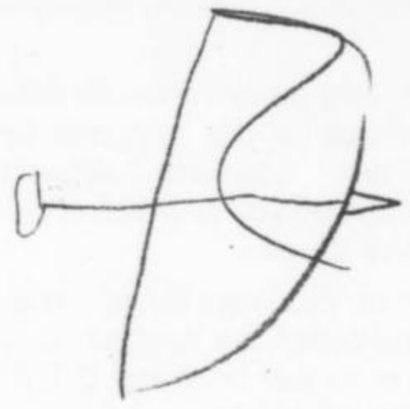

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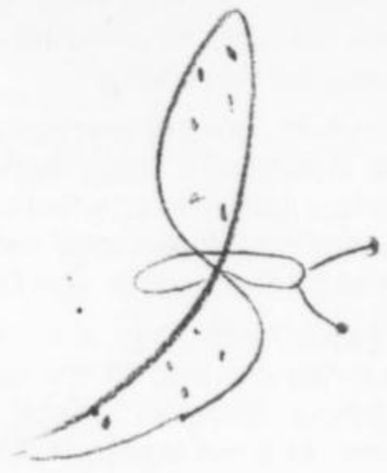

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When Winnicott drew his next squiggle, Ruth's immediate response was to transform it into a harp (6) and to talk about record-players and music. A record-player was put on a shelf beside her but she did not want to use it. Drawing 7: a squiggle by Ruth which the doctor turned into a dancer.

After two more sketches, Winnicott noted that a feeling of confidence had been established which might lead to a desire to reach a deeper level. He asked Ruth to talk about her dreams. "My dreams are almost always the same," said the child. "I dream every night." Then she did a big drawing of a dream. In it Ruth, very small, can be seen running towards her mother (8). Although the drawing does not "say" anything about the birth of the third child, when Ruth described her dream she talked about this baby and how it was fed. In the drawing, the mother's hands are inactive, one of her legs is deformed, and she seems to be smiling.

At the end of her mother's pregnancy Ruth had begun to steal—either baby food or money with which to buy it.

After Ruth had drawn this optimistic version of her dream, Winnicott wanted to elicit a pessimistic version of it. This time Ruth drew herself very small and very distant from her mother (9). She said that there was poison in the sea behind her. This image communicated to Winnicott an immediate impression of separation and despair. While Ruth was drawing, she felt that she was getting further and further away from her mother. The drawing she did of herself, he added, was perfectly straight from the shoulders down. The downturned lines of her mouth were continued by the arms and became part of a bag which contained no food for the baby. She said that this was why she had had to stuff herself with food. "When there was no more poison, I got fat again".

Winnicott then asked Ruth whether she had ever stolen anything, to which she replied that she had stolen baby food and eaten it.

Winnicott stressed the importance of getting this information from Ruth herself. Eight-year-old Ruth had thus proved capable of recalling, reliving and illustrating the distress she had felt at a moment of deprivation, when she had lost all hope of facing up to her mother's pregnancy and the birth of her little sister. For her this was a therapeutic experience and the subsequent changes in her behaviour benefitted her family as a whole.

Drawings from *Therapeutic Consultations in Child Psychiatry* © Hogarth Press, London

9

enough to learn to read, or, in the case of illiterate adults, those who are able to understand a code and a system of explanation based on reasoning.

In fact contemporary psychology and psychoanalysis tell us that the individual's basic options (attitude to the opposite sex, behaviour patterns connected with "race" and with "difference" in general) are determined before the age of 5 or 6, which is considered to be the normal age for learning to read.

Psychopathology also reveals that the majority of behavioural disturbances and of the main "neuroses" are formed during the "Œdipus complex" stage, which is to say between 2 1/2 and 5 years, or even earlier, during the "oral" phase.

It is as if, out of respect for the printed word, which, historically, is only one of several systems of communication, we were allowing such major diseases of civilization as racism and anti-feminism to get a good hold before turning to books—and to reason—to combat them. Prevention, however, is always easier than cure.

Dead ends, wrong targets, right approaches

It would be extremely useful to build up a file on early childhood and the pre-reading age based on study of the interests and mental make-up characteristic of these early stages of development, including, for example the development of what the English paediatrician and psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott refers to as the "transitional object", a blanket or item of clothing impregnated with the mother's smell which the very young child uses for the "ritual" of going to sleep, since it would appear, from the present state of our knowledge, that the book is a successor to this "object".

It would be an unforgivable mistake to limit the inculcation of "humanistic" values to age-groups which can read fluently and to books proper, as the main prejudices and ideological afflictions of humanity (racism, anti-feminism, war-mongering, passivity, disregard of the rights of others) have had time to become firmly rooted in the conscious and, even more important, in the unconscious of the 8- to 12-year-old child.

The real battle must be fought with children under the age of 6, and must be waged with the spoken word, games, pictures and mime, the written message being used only to consolidate what has already been assimilated.

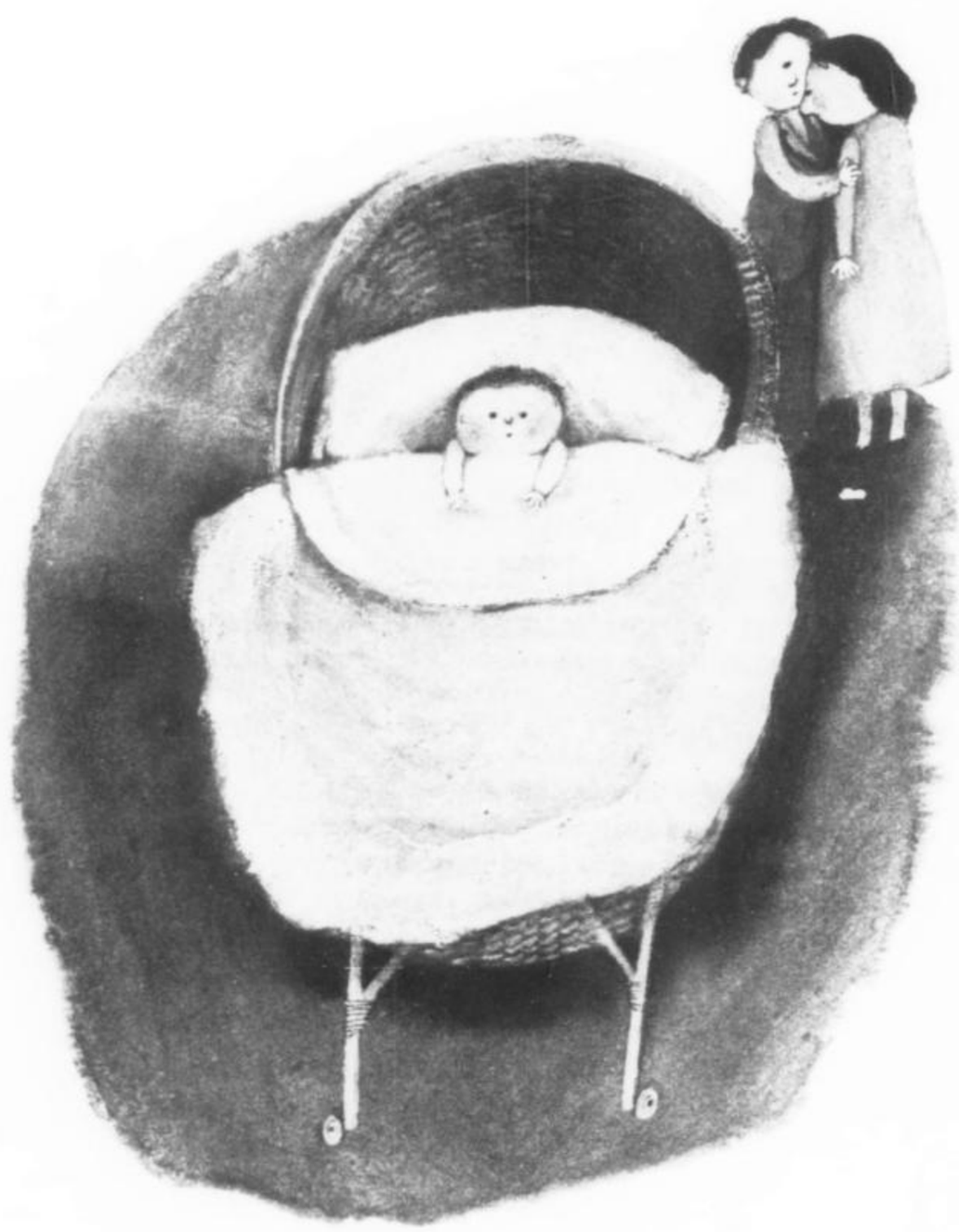
This calls into question the traditional concept of authorship, which is already in practice undergoing some changes; in some branches of children's literature, particularly the production of encyclopaedias, but also fiction based on contemporary problems, the author is replaced by a team in which one person is responsible for "ideas", another for dialogue, another for illustrations, another for layout, etc., these individuals sometimes being chosen for their particular skills, but more often at random or simply for reasons of cost.

The author should be reinstated as the person responsible for ideas (or the lack of them) and at the same time supported by a team which should include as a matter of course the "customers" and educational experts, i.e. children or teachers.

■ **Marc Soriano**

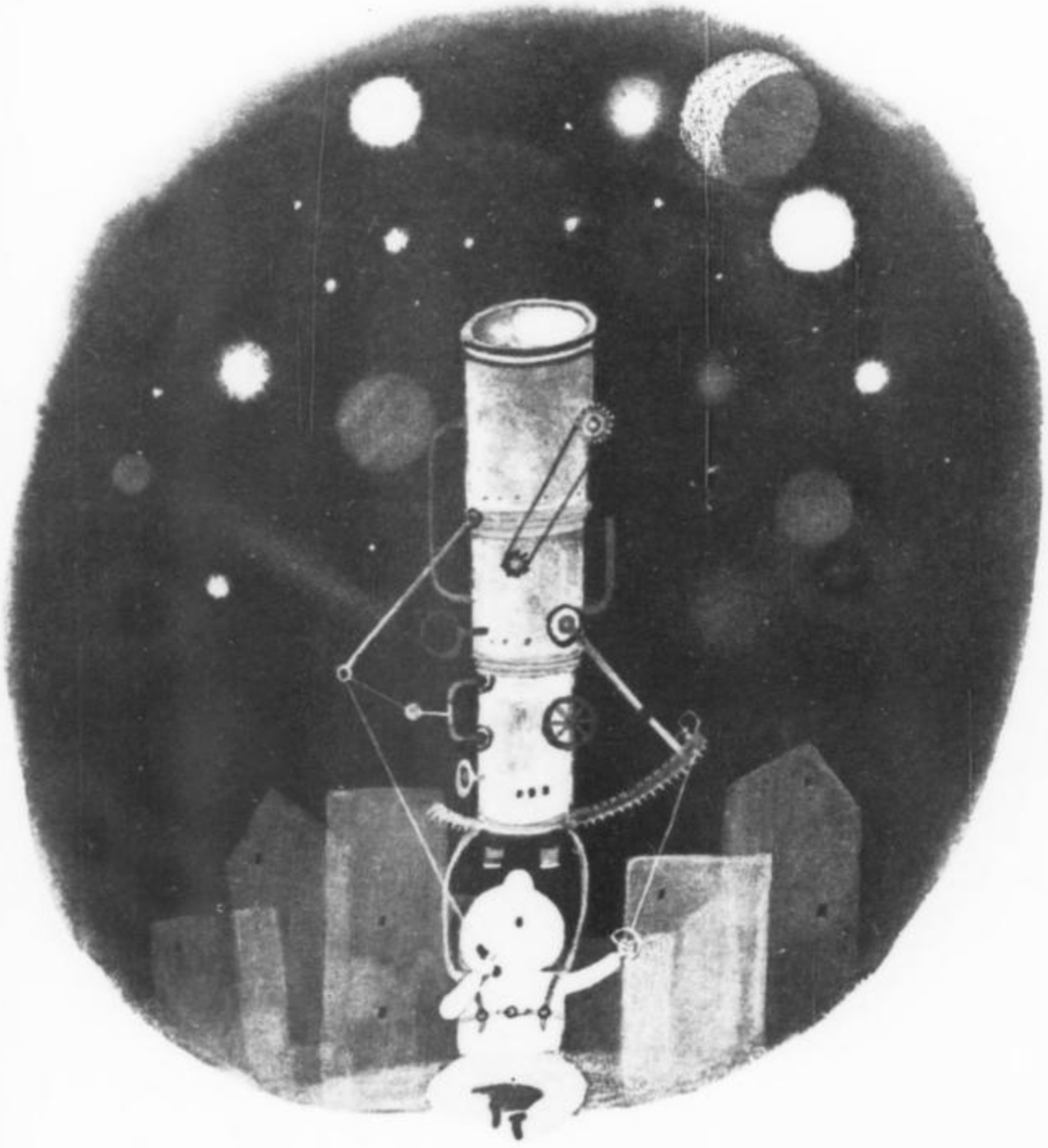
'The boy with two eyes'

"The child who is physically (or) mentally... handicapped shall be given the special treatment, education and care required by his particular condition", states the fifth article of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child proclaimed by the United Nations. This principle has inspired a children's book, *The Boy with Two Eyes,* a slightly condensed version of which is reproduced on this double page with some of the illustrations (in colour in the original). The book forms part of a series of ten, each volume illustrating one of the ten articles of the Declaration. The series, first published in Spanish, has now appeared in eleven other language editions: English, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Norwegian, Portuguese and Welsh. The books were designed and originally produced by the Madrid publishing house Altea. The Spanish text of *The Boy with Two Eyes* is by J.L. Garcia Sanchez and M.A. Pacheco; the illustrations are by Ulises Wensell. The English edition of the series is published by Basil Blackwell, Oxford, U.K.



Way out in space there is a planet just like Earth. The people who live there are just like us—except for one thing—they have only one eye. But with their one eye they can see far, far away. They can see straight through walls. One day a strange child was born. He had two eyes! His mother and father were very upset.

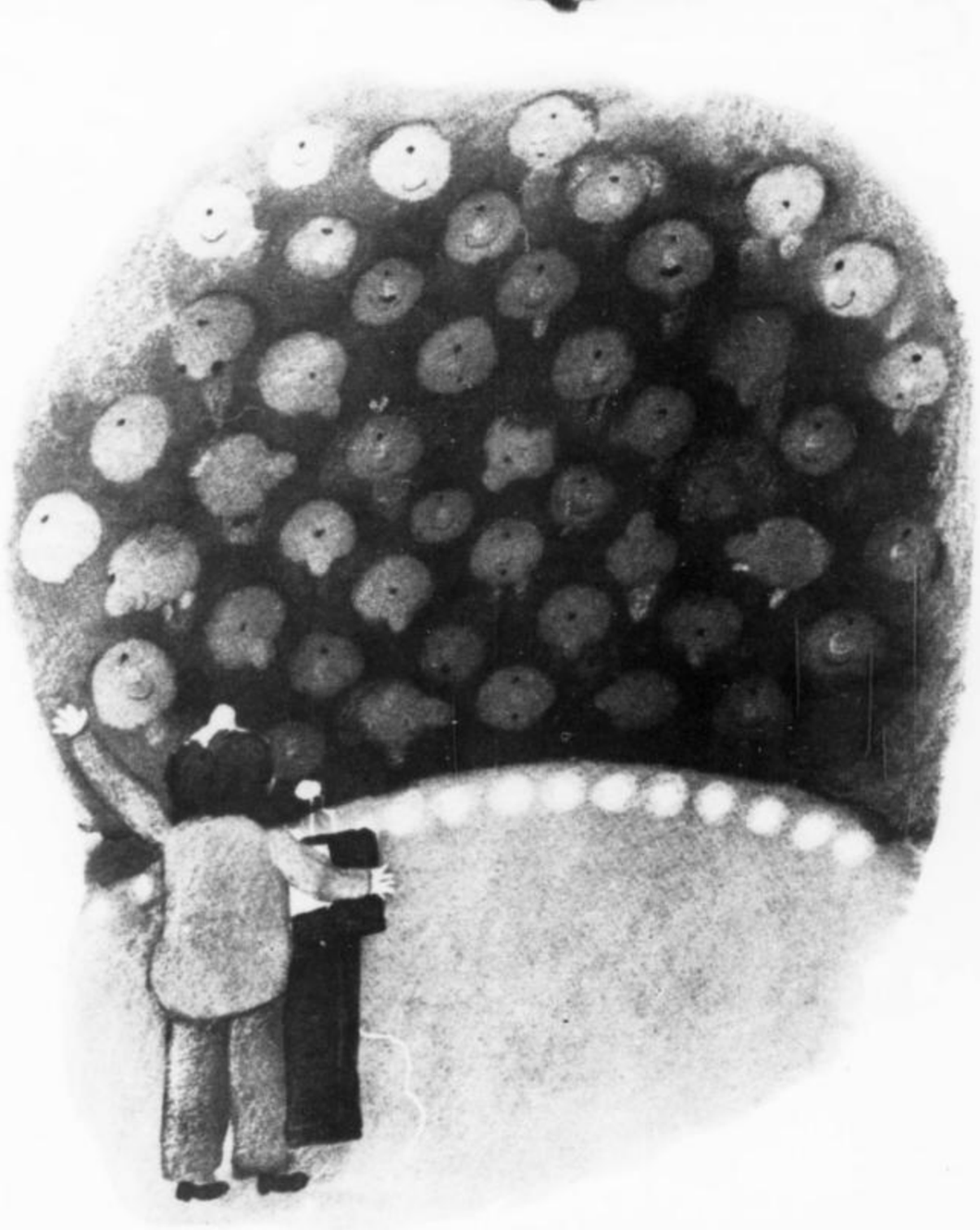
The boy was a happy child. His parents loved him and enjoyed looking after him but they were worried because he was so unusual. They took him to lots of doctors. The doctors shook their heads and said "Nothing can be done".



As the child grew up he had more and more problems. When he went to school he could not read as well as other children. His teachers had to give him extra help. He couldn't see long distances so he had to have a special telescope.

Illustrations Ulises Wensell © Altea, Madrid

But one exciting day he discovered that he could see something that nobody else could see. He did not see in black and white as everyone else did. His parents and friends were amazed by his thrilling discovery. He told them wonderful stories. He used words they had never heard before... like red... and yellow... and orange.



One day he met a girl. They fell in love and got married. She didn't mind that he had two eyes. And then he found that he didn't mind either. He became very famous. People came from all over the planet to hear him talk.

Victor Guye
by Goya (1746-1828)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Edward VI as a Child
by Hans Holbein (1497-1543)
National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Portraits of childhood

Portrait of a Child (detail)
by a 16th century Austrian artist
Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt,
Fed. Rep. of Germany

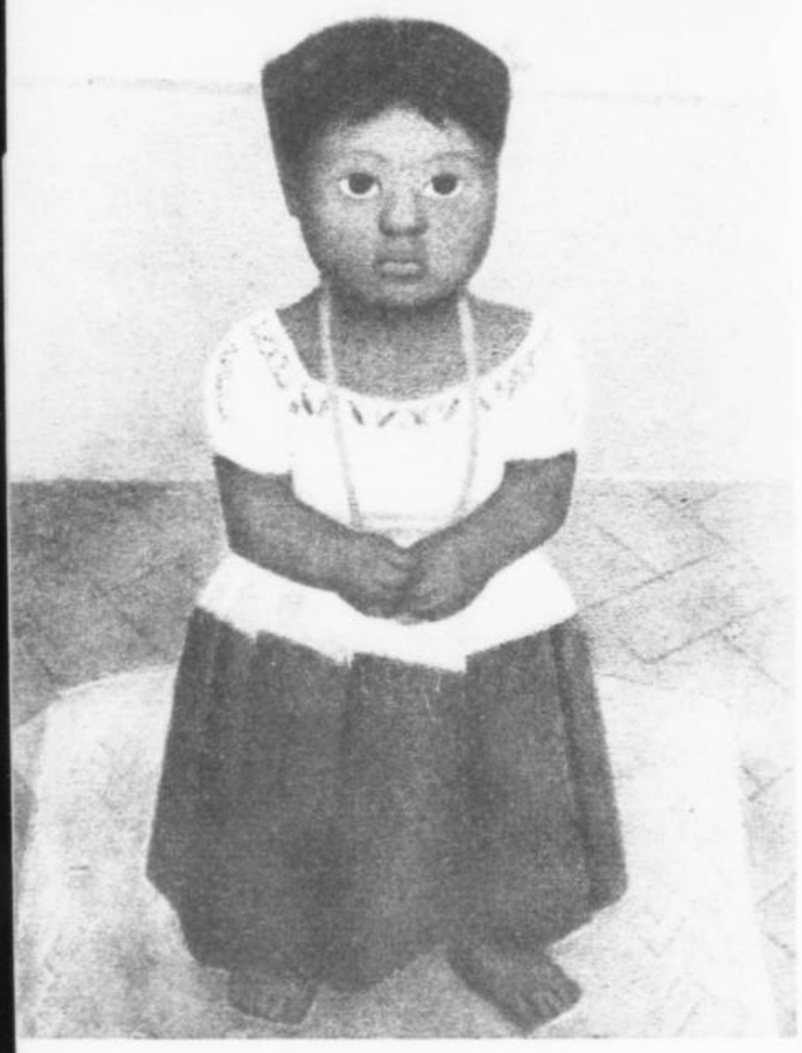
Little Margot Bérard (detail)
by Renoir (1841-1919)
Stephen C. Clark Collection, New York

The Artist's Son
by Picasso (1881-1973)
Artist's collection

Portrait of the Artist's Son Titus (detail)
by Rembrandt (1606-1669)
The Norton Simon Foundation, Los Angeles, California

Maria de Medici (detail)
Daughter of the Duke of Tuscany
by Bronzino (1503-1572)
Galleria Degli Uffizi, Florence

Delfina Flores
by Diego Rivera (1886-1957)
McNay Art Institute, San Antonio, Texas



UNESCO

and the International Year of the Child

UNESCO's activities in connexion with the International Year of the Child (1979), proclaimed by the General Assembly of the United Nations, form part of a continuing effort on behalf of the world's children which began when Unesco was created over thirty years ago and faced the urgent task of helping children whose lives and education had been tragically disrupted by war.

Ever since then, Unesco has sought, through its work in education, the social sciences, culture and communication, to strengthen global and national commitment to the welfare of children and to promote action designed to bring about lasting improvements in their lives.

During the International Year of the Child, Unesco is covering a very broad spectrum of activities encompassing the education of handicapped children; the protection of the rights of children, with special attention to those of migrant workers and refugees; the promotion and development of children's books and libraries; the encouragement of international support for action programmes in favour of children in developing countries; studies on such questions as the impact of educational television on young children and the ways in which children form scientific and technological concepts; the training of staff for pre-school education.

To help attract the attention of the world community to children and their needs, and to make Unesco and its work better known to a youthful audience, a range of publications, films and radio and television programmes have been produced.

A programme co-produced by Unesco and French television (TF.1) brings to the screen seven world leaders whose messages on the theme of IYC are interwoven with songs and dances by children's groups from different parts of the globe. Already broadcast in France, it is being adapted into many different languages and is expected to be shown in some forty or fifty countries. As part of an international film exchange project co-ordinated by Unesco, TV networks in ten countries are exploring childhood in different social and cultural environments. Each network has agreed to produce a film on the theme "the child and his world" and to exchange a copy freely with the others, so that all participating countries will benefit from the complete series. Unesco is also preparing a series of radio programmes on children's rights, while a number of short cartoon films for children on "Discovering Unesco" are being made in co-operation with Channel 3 of French television. Unesco will shortly be publishing a study, based on recent research, of the effects of educational television on children.

New Unesco publications specially written for young readers include *A World for Everybody,* a booklet for children up to nine years old which describes Unesco's aims and action in simple, informal terms, and a braille book with pictures in relief explaining Unesco to blind children.

A travelling exhibition of children's toys and games from all over the world, already held at Unesco's Paris headquarters, will be on show in a joint Unicef-Unesco pavilion at the "Man and his World" Exhibition at Montreal, Canada, between June and September, while an international exhibition of children's books is scheduled to take place in Paris in April.

Young people from eighty-five countries are taking part in a drawing competition sponsored by National Commissions for Unesco or national press or radio and television organizations. The entries, on the theme "My life in the year 2000", will be judged by an international jury at Unesco headquarters on 15 May.

Finally, the illustrations on these pages bear witness to another Unesco initiative for IYC. They are taken from a forthcoming catalogue of reproductions of paintings depicting children, a publication inspired by the popularity, over the years, of Unesco's two-volume guide to reproductions of major works of art. ■

Photos © Unesco

A Little Girl
by Mabuse (1472 ?-1536 ?)
The National Gallery, London

The distorting influence of race prejudice on the presentation of facts in school textbooks is a disturbing phenomenon and one which is more widespread than is generally believed. The problem is not new and scarcely a country in the world can claim to have eliminated it entirely. In its efforts to promote international understanding and respect for human rights, Unesco is closely concerned with this situation and its corrosive effects on children's minds. Thus, some time ago, Unesco sponsored a project in which specialists from France, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, Japan, Kenya, the United Kingdom and Venezuela reviewed secondary school history, geography and social studies textbooks from each of these seven countries. A report of their work was later published as *Promoting International Understanding through School Textbooks.* As part of its current programme Unesco, in co-operation with its Member States, is intensifying efforts to improve the content of textbooks at all levels of education. Aspects of this problem have been discussed in recent issues of the *Unesco Courier* in articles by Renée Miot on "Textbooks, Stereotypes and Anti-Feminine Prejudices" (August-September 1975) and by Jorge-Enrique Adoum on race prejudice in fairy tales (January 1979).

The two articles below, by Prof. Hugo O. Ortega and Beryle Banfield, present an analysis of some of the ways in which race prejudice in school textbooks presents a distorted picture of the facts. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that these are specific instances of a situation that exists in almost every country in the world.

The authors took part in an international conference on "Racism in Children's and School Textbooks" held at Arnoldshain (Federal Republic of Germany) in October 1978. The Conference was organized by the World Council of Churches, a non-governmental organization which, through its Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, has consultative status with Unesco.

Racism in textbooks

Through other eyes

by Hugo O. Ortega

THE ever-increasing store of children's literature forms a fundamental element in the education of the child, opening up the world of poetry, of fable and legend and bringing to him the life stories of national and world heroes. The prestige of the printed word and the importance that teachers attach to books weigh heavily with children; it is through books that the foundations of their knowledge are laid.

The importance of books for transmitting information and values prompted me to examine the "image" of the "Indian" (or, more precisely, the indigenous inhabitant) as it appears in thirty children's books recently published in Argentina. Eighty-three per cent of the passages I analysed refer to the Indian in the past, a past that stretches from pre-Columbian times, through the age in which America was "discovered", the Spanish colonial period and its end, to the era of independence and national construction. The few references to the "Indian" of today bear no relation whatever to the actual conditions of their lives.

Most of the texts which give prominence to the past deal with occasions when the Indians came into contact with the troops of Christopher Columbus and his successors. One of them tells how Columbus sailed westwards in the service of the Spanish crown until the day when "A sailor on the *Pinta* spied land. It was the twelfth of October, 1492. Christopher Columbus went ashore on an island *populated with Indians,* and called it San Salvador. The *Indians* were wide-eyed with astonishment at the sight of the *white men.* Columbus thought that he had reached the Indies, but he had *discovered a new world.* Points to remember: Christopher Columbus discovered America on the twelfth of October 1492".

The central idea the child is intended to grasp is that of "discovery". This is a concept of European historiography; it is an ethnocentric concept since it presumes that the continent, its people and its wealth only acquired value *because* they were discovered and recognized by the centre of the world, in other words, Europe. It is hardly surprising, then, that civilization (clothes, big ships, white men and the faculty for naming places and people) should be equated with Europe and that barbarism (the Indians and the "new" world) should be equated with America.

The artist who illustrated this text depicted a handsome and angelic Columbus stepping ashore amidst a fierce and menacing group of "Indians". The illustration is accompanied by exercises in which the child is required to fill in blanks in an incomplete sentence; the words "Columbus discovered America" are given as the correct words to complete the sentence: "When ———, he met *savages* whom he called Indians". At that moment and for all time, the indigenous people of this continent were wrongly labelled "Indians". This fallacious generalization subsequently came to describe the multitude of indigenous nations of America whose people would be presented as half-naked "savages" garbed in feathered head-dresses.

Another description of the "discovery" runs as follows:
— "Land ahoy!
— Land ! Land!
— The Indies! The Indies!
— At last! We've made it! An island! Palm trees!"
— There's something moving over there in the trees...
— Look! *Half-naked men!*
— They're wearing feathers! They're signalling to us! They're coming to us!"
— "(...) The island was inhabited by *men with copper-coloured skins;* who were *half-naked.* Columbus called them *Indians,* for he was under the impression that he had reached the Indies, the country he was looking for. However, the land was part of a hitherto *unknown continent* which would later be called America".

The stereotype begins to take definite shape. The indigenous people were half-naked and copper-coloured (in English they would be dubbed redskins) and were generally referred to as "Indians". Here lies the first major contradiction: a continent in-

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HUGO O. ORTEGA, *Argentine educationist, is director of the Albert Schweitzer College, at Mendoza, Argentina. He took part in the organization of the technical education programme of the Republic of Panama of whose Panamerican Institute he was formerly the director. He has made a study of indigenous groups in Argentina, in particular, of the Toba Indians. His articles have appeared in several Latin American and Spanish magazines and he was one of the contributing authors of* Youth in Latin America, *published by Friendship Press, New York, in 1970.*

Photo © Gaillarde, Paris

What will this little girl of the South American high plateaux learn from school textbooks of her people's history and culture? All too often she will be offered a distorted, "Westernized" picture which travesties the values of her people and their world.

habited by people with their own cultures is described as "unknown". Why do the authors insist on the European origin of America, a continent inhabited for over 20,000 years by groups of émigrés who originated in Central Asia and crossed over what is now the Bering Strait?

This fundamental historical ambiguity, which the child learns early in life, prevents him from understanding the link which exists between Argentines (and Latin Americans in general) and the great civilizations which flourished in our continent for thousands of years. As generation after generation of children read this account of the "discovery", they are induced to denigrate that part of our origins which goes back to men who lived at the beginning of the Bronze Age and to men who at the end of the Middle Ages came into contact with a Genoese sailor and a handful of Spaniards.

The authors of the second description of the "discovery" quoted above have also published an account of the foundation of the city of Buenos Aires by the Spaniard Pedro de Mendoza in 1536: "When they (the Spaniards) disembarked, the *Indians* were very astonished. They had never seen *men with white skin,* nor such clothing... Mendoza named the settlement 'Santa Maria del Buen Aire'... The Indians offered them food: fruit and game. But conflict soon broke out and provisions began to grow short. The settlers set out in search of food and often had to fight the *savages.* One day the Indians attacked the city and burned it".

Why, one might ask, do the authors fail to explain the changes in the relationship between the "Indians" and the "white men"? Why do they insinuate that the indigenous population was capricious and savage by nature, while keeping silent about the many extortionate demands made on them by the Christian conquistadors? What a contrast between this ethnocentric reading of history and the following denunciation of the conquistadors penned by the Spanish Dominican Fray Bartolomé de las Casas in 1513! "When they arrived at the village [of Camaguey in Cuba] they found the Indians living peacefully in their habitations. And yet they increasingly wronged and scandalized them and, not content with what the Indians offered them of their own free will, robbed them of the few valuables they possessed. Even worse, some of them attacked women and girls, for such is and always has been the usual behaviour of the Spaniards in the Indies".

The illustrations to the story of Buenos Aires show the "savagery" of the attacking Indians and the superiority of the Europeans; Mendoza, dressed like a lord, founds the city and gives it its name while an "Indian" squatting at his feet gapes in astonishment. The exercises which go with the text require the child to use the words he has just learned: "savage, tribe, chief, bow, arrow" in order to complete such sentences as "The Indians lived in a — state".

"When Columbus discovered America he encountered savage men, whom he called Indians." (From a book of exercises for children)

"The native American is depicted in pejorative fashion as a half-naked savage wearing a feathered head-dress, irrational and inferior to the white European." (Illustration from a textbook on the history of America)

"The settlers went out in search of food and often had to fight the savages. One day the Indians attacked the city and burned it." (From an account of the history of America)

Children are taught how to make animals, objects and an Indian, using paper, string and other materials. (In a manual of handicrafts for eight-year-olds)

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One third of the passages referring to "the Indian" in *the age of independence and national construction* present their positive characteristics; the rest are pejorative. In general, the texts give prominence to three moments in Argentine history: the war of liberation beginning in the nineteenth century; the organization and expansion of the nation; and the age of the liberal republic.

All the texts favourable to "the Indian" fall in the first period. The author of a text for ten-year-old children recounts how, in 1819, "a chief of royal blood", Inca Atahualpa Huascaringa, a descendant of Peruvian sovereigns, also known as José Manuel de Minoguyé, gave "30,000 armed Indians of his personal guard to fight the Spaniards". Although the context aims to express the idea that the indigenous population took part in the liberation struggles waged by the *criollos* (Latin Americans of Spanish descent), the author does not say whether or not the proposal was accepted, nor does he say what became of the chief and his troops.

Elsewhere, the same author tells the story of Cumbay, chief of the Chaco, who offered the Argentine general Manuel Belgrano some 2,000 Indians to fight the Spanish forces. Yet again the reader is not informed whether the offer was accepted nor whether the indigenous people took part in the liberation of the nation. In each case omission of this vital information suggests that the matter in question was to be considered a trifling one and even prefigures the decline of the indigenous nations; liberation brought no improvement in their living conditions, indeed they fell victim to a new domination which completed the process of making them a marginal people.

A general textbook for eight- to nine-year-old children recounts how, during the long process of national consolidation, "a landed proprietor named Juan Manuel de Rosas, who was governor from 1820 to 1832, carried out a mopping-up campaign against the Indians who were attacking the towns". The textbook does not indicate which Indians were concerned, for many of them had come to terms with Rosas and were not involved in these attacks. It does not explain why the indigenous peoples felt such animosity towards the *criollos;* nor does it place the facts in the context of the *criollo* policy of achieving secure frontiers, expanding to the limits of the former Spanish vice-royalty, and occupying all the fertile land for stock-raising and agricultural purposes. Their historic goal of dominion was in total opposition to the aims of the indigenous peoples who had enjoyed free use of these lands for thousands of years before the arrival of the Spaniards and *criollos.*

Nor, indeed, is there any mention of Rosas' conviction that "the Indian problem would only be resolved by their total submission or by the extermination of the recalcitrant among them, that is to say by pursuing the methods used during the Spanish conquest" (Ernesto Palacio, *History of Argentina, 1515 to 1955,* Buenos Aires, 1977). The children are not told that during Rosas' campaign more than ten thousand Indian warriors were liquidated and four thousand taken prisoner. All these historical omissions reinforce the idea of the indigenous population as "savage Indians", "irrational" and "barbaric" enemies of civilization.

Another work from the same publishers, intended for seven- to eight-year-old children, affirms that: "It is difficult today to imagine what life was like in the countryside in the past. The Indians had left the towns but were still masters of the plains. Can you imagine how dangerous it was to cross the pampas? Think of the long, hard roads, the wild animals, and the *Indians always lying in wait".* The author shows concern only for those who lived in the small towns in the interior of the country, for their security and their anxieties. But what of the indigenous peoples who never formed a majority or even a significant minority in any creole town? What were the feelings of these peoples who had once been masters of the land living free of the menace of better-armed enemies? This ethnocentric reading of history gives children a totally false picture of the facts. It presents a slanted account of the confrontation which led to the defeat of the indigenous peoples. The "Indians" are depicted as wild animals of the jungle, always lying in wait for their prey.

How does this picture of the "Indian" of our historic past compare with the image of the indigenous Argentine of today to whom reference is made in some seventeen per cent of the texts?

According to certain authors: "In the Chaquena region today, some Matacos and Tobas still live in the *primitive state.* They generally work at weaving, at picking cotton and cutting sugar cane. From the carob bean *they make a drink called aloja* (a kind of mead) of which they are very fond. The preparation of this drink is the occasion for festivities during which *large quantities are drunk."* Why, of all the aspects of the Mataco and Toba culture, do the authors choose to emphasize their "primitive state" and the fact that they are makers and festive drinkers of *aloja?* Why are we not told of their concept of the communal nature of property, of the way they share their food, of the solidity of their family ties, the absence of sexual promiscuity, their skill at building cool dwellings in a sub-tropical climate, their strong religious beliefs and the decorum of their social life? If they live in a "primitive state", this is not from choice, but because they are the descendants of conquered peoples, forced to inhabit the poorest and most inhospitable regions of a rich republic. This then is a highly biased account which completely ignores the special values and characteristics that have ensured the survival of these ancient peoples.

In another work, the same authors explain that "the Puna (a region of north-west Argentina) is virtually uninhabited; the *native element* is predominant there; it consists of the Coyas who can stand the rarefied air of the mountains better than *the white man".* Although the name of the tribe (Coya) is mentioned, the general reference is to a dehumanized thing, the "native element", as opposed to the white "man". Even more serious is the fact that the Coya is depicted as organically different from the white man—as if the human race in general could not live in the mountains after a period of acclimatization! In this text, the Coya is portrayed as just another denizen of the region, on a par with the llama, the vicuna and the alpaca.

A handicrafts guide for eight-year-old children explains how to make a doll, a shadow theatre, a farm, a dining-room, a colonial building, a piglet and other objects. The young reader is also shown how to make just two figures—the mythical figure of Father Christmas and an Indian and his hut. Thus the indigenous Argentine is placed firmly in the world of objects and myth; he is not seen as a real person. The "Indian" is a thing that children can make out of paper and string and paint; his hut *is not even a replica of an Argentine dwelling,* but a stereotyped imitation of the *teepee* of the Sioux Indians of the great prairies of North America, as depicted throughout the world by the mass media.

Yet another text makes play with a similar stereotype. The hero of the story is a little boy whose name, Geronimo, inevitably evokes the famous Apache chief who defied the federal troops of the United States from 1850 to 1880. Why did not the author choose an indigenous name from the thousands still in use in our tribes today?

In a "note to the teacher", the author of a book of stories for children of pre-school age explains that "in addition to fairies and other magical creatures, the characters children feel most affection for are other children, toys and animals—dogs, cats, rabbits, horses, ducks, and squirrels. The teacher should take care to *present each animal in accordance with its real characteristics* since this helps the child to situate himself in the world and to understand it (...). It is the task of the school to achieve this".

Later on in the same book we come across a piece of dialogue between children who are "playing at Indians": "I am the chief", says Luis, *"because I am the biggest."* "I am the doctor of the tribe", says Jorge, *"because I have got a satchel."* "I am an *Indian hunter",* cries Carlos, "because I have some sticks pointed like arrows." Then chief Blue Eagle speaks: "Come on, *Indians,* let's go into the forest." The story ends with a song: "I'm an Indian, I'm an Indian, *Me kill puma,* I'm an Indian, I'm an Indian, And I eat maize, I'm an Indian, I'm an Indian, I'm off to bed".

The writer is putting into the heads of five-year-old children the notion that chiefs are chosen for their physical stature, whereas, in fact, wisdom and experience are the most important considerations in a complex selection process; similarly, the medicine man is chosen for his spirituality and religious knowledge. No one can claim any special right simply because he possesses a particular object. An Indian does not become a fisherman because his father has given him a boat—this would be more in line with the way things are done among the wealthier classes in the west—but because his father and, indeed, the whole tribe have taught him to fish, an activity that is practised collectively in a communally owned boat.

The indigenous Argentines do not refer to themselves as "indians". We know that some tribes refer to each other as *paisa-*

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How racism takes root

by Beryle Banfield

EXTENSIVE research on the development of racial attitudes in children has led to general agreement on several important points. By the age of four, most children are aware of their own racial identity and the racial identity of others.

By the age of about 10 years, the attitudes of most children will have been firmly crystallized and will reflect the racial attitudes dominant in their society. These research findings have important implications for those concerned with the elimination of racism in children's materials.

Racism in textbooks is usually most evident in five important areas: the historical perspective from which the material is presented; the characterization of Third World peoples; the manner in which their customs and traditions are depicted; the terminology used to describe the peoples and their culture and the type of language ascribed to them; and the nature of illustrations.

History in textbooks is usually presented from a Eurocentric perspective omitting or distorting the history of the Third World peoples prior to the European contact. Third World people are portrayed as incapable of having developed their own institutions prior to the coming of the Europeans. Encroachment on the land of the indigenous peoples is glorified as the opening up of the frontier by gallant and courageous European men and women. The slaughter of indigenous people is glossed over and the defenders of their homelands are depicted as marauding "savages" and cruel murderers. The colonization and slavery experiences are presented as beneficial to Third World people providing them with discipline and skills previously unknown to them. Rejection of the people's own culture in favour of assimilation into that of the European is regarded as desirable. The following excerpts are illustrative.

"Fighting broke out between the Maori and Europeans over whose land was whose just as in earlier days there had been battles between one Maori tribe and another. But at last the fighting stopped."

"During all the troubles the new settlers built towns, made farms and spread throughout New Zealand. From time to time the Maori tribes disagreed with the new ways but by this time the European settlers had an army to help keep the peace."

In this passage, the taking of Maori land and the imposition of foreign rule and culture is glossed over. Justification of European actions is implied by the reference to earlier wars between Maori groups. The destruction of Maori culture is dismissed and the use of force to impose an alien culture is justified as necessary to keep the peace.

"The Eastern Woodland Indians did not develop a highly advanced culture. But their culture did make it possible for them to live successfully in ways suited to their needs..."

"Beginning in the mid 1600's the world of the Eastern Woodland Indians suddenly changed. The Indians faced Europeans, who were people with more advanced cultures. These Europeans had better weapons, better tools, and more advanced forms of political organization."

This text clearly evaluated the culture of the Eastern Woodland Indians from a Eurocentric viewpoint. The society they developed was in many ways more politically sophisticated than that of the Europeans in terms of the participation of women in the political decision-making process and the general level of citizen involvement. The political organization of the six nations of the Iroquois Confederacy served as the model for the colonies when they moved to set up a new nation.

Illustrations provide powerful reinforcement for the racial stereotypes projected in textual materials and play a considerable role in forming a child's first impressions of other peoples. Such stereotypes have now become internationalized. There is the African child, naked except for a bracelet on her ankle; the Mexican, wearing a sombrero and reclining under a cactus, the half-naked American Indian, in a feather headdress and carrying a bow and arrow, the Chinese coolies and the blond American cowboy.

These are caricatural figures, as true and as false as any caricature; their danger is that they polarize the child's perceptions and in so doing conceal from him the immense achievements of other peoples and the rich variety of other cultures.■

Photo Pierre Michaud © Rapho, Paris

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What should we do with whizzkids?

by Arthur V. Petrovsky

IN his recent science-fiction story about the development of a "wonder boy" the American author, Joseph Shallit, describes an experiment conducted by a psychologist, Doctor Elliot, who, by exposing an embryo's brain to special rays, succeeds in activating to an extraordinary extent the child's aptitudes and in creating a considerable and constantly increasing disparity between his physical age and his mental age.

At the age of one, Donny's mental age is that of a three- to four-year-old; at two, that of a child of ten, and so on. The headlong but unilateral development of Donny's aptitudes, the obvious incompatibility between his appearance and his actual age begin to embarrass seriously those around him, first and foremost, his father and mother. Before long, Donny is preparing to eliminate his parents who have become obstacles to the realization of his selfish ambitions.

Shallit's gloomy tale, of course, exaggerates the dangers of too intensive development of children's mental aptitudes. But the uncommon situation of a "miracle child" always contains the potential danger of deviation and the monstrous development of the personality.

The Soviet educationalist Anton Makarenko has devoted a chapter of his remarkable *Book of Parents* to an experiment which somewhat resembles that of Dr. Elliot.

True, Piotr Ketov, who had decided to make his only son a famous man, did not have access to a fantastic "mind maturer", but this was more than made up for by the excessive and unthinking love of the mother, her anguished fear for her son and the attitude of the father, who systematically placed the son in exceptional situations, subordinating the entire life of the family to the single task of developing the intellect and talents of his child.

Victor, the son, quickly outstrips the other children of his age and shows not the slightest interest in them. At five, he speaks Russian and German correctly; at ten, he is studying the classics; at twelve, he can read Schiller in the original and skips the fifth form; at seventeen, he enters the mathematics faculty and astounds his professors by his brilliant talents and scholarship. In short, he has followed the typical path of a gifted child. But, in other respects, he has become a thorough-going egoist, cold, cynical and calculating, indifferent to anything not connected with his success and his pleasures. Victor's story has a tragically banal ending:

"Coming from the kitchen, his mother rushed towards him and said in a trembling and weary voice:

A boarding school for exceptionally gifted children from distant parts of the U.S.S.R. has been set up in Moscow on the urging of Academician Andrei Kolmogorov, a leading Soviet mathematician. Each year over 200 teenagers from the central and southern regions of European Russia are accepted at the school, which is attached to Moscow University. After a course of study in which maths and physics play a major part, almost all the pupils go on to higher educational institutions specializing in science. At least half enter Moscow University or the Moscow Physico-Technical Institute. Similar schools have been established in Leningrad, Novosibirsk and Kiev. Here, Kolmogorov and his students enjoy a moment of relaxation between lectures.

Photo V. Khristophorov © Tass

— Victor, could you go to the chemist's? The medicine is ready and paid for. It is urgent.

Turning his tousled head on his pillow, Piotr Alexandrovitch Ketov looked at his son; a forced smile was on his lips. The sight of his grown son gave him pleasure despite the suffering caused by his ulcer. Victor looked at his mother and replied with a cold smile:

— No, I cannot. My friends are waiting for me. I'm taking the key."

The presence of a gifted child in a family does not make the educational tasks faced by the family unit any easier. On the contrary, it makes them more difficult. This is why it is necessary not only to create favourable conditions for the development of the child's talent, to feed his extraordinary energy, but also to pay particular attention to encouraging those aspirations which will enable him to become a part of the community.

He must be made aware that his great aptitudes do not give him the right to make greater demands on those around him, but that they, on the contrary, especially his parents and teachers, have the right to demand more of him. If he understands that his talent creates not only rights but also special duties, then a favourable development of his personality can be expected.

Today, it is generally accepted that a pedagogical doctrine concerning gifted children reflects the general principles and pedagogical methods used in a society.

In order to understand this phenomenon of gifted children—a phenomenon more widespread than is generally believed—we

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Photo P. Kuznetsov © *Fotokhronika Tass*, Moscow

The education of highly gifted children raises many questions. Should they be taught in special schools for child prodigies? Should they be schooled with less able children, at the risk of becoming apathetic and losing their intellectual sharpness? Should they be pushed to their limits and treated as if they were older than their years? Many approaches have been tried; each has advantages and disadvantages. Left, three-year-old Olga concentrates on a game of draughts.

must bear in mind that gifted children remain children with all the special attributes of children, even if these have been modified and transformed by the exceptional character of their gifts. Psychologists are interested in gifted children not because they want to record their achievements but because they want to try to pick out those characteristics of their personalities which make us consider them to be gifted children.

If we only take the exceptional traits of a gifted child into account, he is liable to see himself as an exceptional being and to become arrogant, presumptuous or unhealthily timid.

Gifted children easily perform school exercises which are beyond the comprehension of older children. However, children do not develop in a uniform manner; nor is an individual child's intellectual, practical, moral and affective development uniform either. Thus, it is possible for a gifted child to surpass all the other children of his age in a specific field while lagging behind in all the others.

Even when those around him consider him to be a prodigy, a child remains a child. And this simple proposition must govern our attitude towards him. This means that he must be given intellectual and creative work corresponding to his special capabilities in a specific field and be provided with the means to succeed. He must not be handicapped in this respect. Nor is it desirable to attempt to speed up his intellectual development artificially or to want him to skip a class and outstrip his age group, not because he "could not stand the strain" (a greatly exaggerated danger) but because, in such a situation, personality development may be upset.

The child prodigy who, for example, solves a number of complex equations and then returns enthusiastically to his toys, is sometimes laughed at and made aware of the illusory nature of his maturity. This can induce morosity, arrogance and mistrust. We should, therefore, concern ourselves, first and foremost, not with the development of his gifts, but with the harmonious formation of his personality of which intellectual aptitudes are only one element.

An unthinking desire to widen the gap between a child's mental and real age could lead to a situation in which a gifted child, while moving out of the child's world from an intellectual point of view, cannot find his place in the adult world because of his moral and affective immaturity. These internal contradictions are a source of conflict and could lead to a highly explosive situation.

Nowadays, the problem of talented children and their education is a major social problem and a concern of the State. In the Soviet Union, the detection of special talents has always been aided by various competitive examinations and through olympiads in mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry and literature held all over the country every year and which attract hundreds of thousands of students. But this method can do no more than reveal the "raw material" for further action.

Today, experts are devoting themselves to this task. Several boarding and specialized schools have already been established to offer the most favourable conditions for the development of the aptitudes of students in mathematics and in other fields.

The author of this article has seen this system in operation at one of the special mathematics schools. The students work under the supervision of teachers from the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of Moscow University. The preliminary selection and the development of the mathematical aptitudes of the children take place at an evening school for mathematics at which the courses are given by university seniors assisted by final-year students from the special mathematics school. Thus, when the entry examinations for the mathematics school are held (examinations every bit as serious as those for admission to higher educational institutions), the school administrators and the representatives of Moscow University can choose from among the pick of the students.

This is the start of a life of intensive and fascinating work for "the happy few". In addition to the usual scholastic courses, they have to follow a special programme, attend lectures by university professors, take part in seminars and solve extremely complicated mathematical problems.

Although emphasis is on the specialized disciplines, there is no lowering of the level demanded in other subjects of the school programme. It should be noted that the child prodigies, contrary to preconceived notions, are not "eggheads" with puny bodies, but children full of vigour and the joy of living, excellent at sports who say jokingly: "We're attending a physical education school with a mathematical bent".

But mathematics, music and chess have always been a special case. Talent in these fields shows itself at an early stage and a child with a gift for music or mathematics can be singled out very early on.

But what of other aptitudes which are not so easy to detect? For several years, for example, a school sponsored by the Chemistry Faculty of Moscow University has been in operation in Moscow. The system of olympiads for districts, cities, regions, republics and, finally for the whole Soviet Union offers the opportunity to distinguish from the mass of students the best of the literary-inclined, geographers or biologists and to undertake the creation of new specialized secondary schools for these students.

Another important aspect of the way in which these schools operates is that even the strongest students do not feel that they are "different", "not like the others", because the general level of these schools is very high. They are, in fact, places for large-scale, long-term experimentation, where children receive the training for their social role that could not be provided by the family.

The ways and means of detecting talent and encouraging it are the subject of endless discussions which are far from being resolved. How and where should we teach these children? Should we educate them like the others and let the talented ones emerge spontaneously?

The experiment continues for benefit of the only truly privileged persons: the children.

■ **Arthur V. Petrovsky**

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Through other eyes

nos, and this is how they wish to be known. It is insulting to make the "Indian" use the infinitive ("me kill puma"). This may well raise a laugh in the nursery school, but not from the indigenous pupils for whom, even today, Castilian Spanish is the language of the dominant culture. The author has forgotten his own warning note to the teachers—"animals must be presented in accordance with their real characteristics". Why did he not follow his own advice when describing the native peoples of his own land?

The picture that emerges from all this leads to the following conclusions:

- the indigenous Argentine is a creature of the past;
- little is known about the different aboriginal peoples and their cultural characteristics—they are all "Indians";
- the native American is depicted in pejorative fashion as a half-naked savage wearing a feathered head-dress, irrational and inferior to the white European;
- the emphasis on the "discovery" of the continent over-values Europe to the detriment of ancient American civilizations and covers up Europe's appropriation of the continent;
- the indigenous person is often denigrated and considered an object—children play at Indians, make models of Indians and their huts;
- history omits information essential to the understanding of the complex causes of the decadence of the indigenous Argentine nations;
- instead of presenting the true situation of the "Indian" there is a tendency to reproduce North American stereotypes—teepees, Geronimo, Blue Eagle.

All this amounts to a process of negation, of a kind of cultural genocide which in turn leads to an indirect form of real genocide—no less serious because it is indirect—which consists of depriving an important ethnic minority of a share in the resources of their land of origin.

■ **Hugo O. Ortega**

Family of Country People, **a painting by one of the Le Nain brothers (probably Louis). A detail of the work is featured on page 2 of this issue.**

Photo © Lauros-Giraudon, Paris. Louvre Museum, Paris

Victoria Ocampo in 1947 with Unesco's first Director-General, Julian Huxley.

Photo © V. Ocampo, Buenos Aires

Victoria Ocampo

On 28 January 1979 Victoria Ocampo passed away at her villa in San Isidro near Buenos Aires (Argentina). Her death marks the disappearance of a towering figure in Latin American culture, who in addition to working as a writer devoted her long life (she was eighty-eight when she died) to promoting contact and understanding between cultures. To her mansion at San Isidro she welcomed many leading world thinkers and creative artists including Rabindranath Tagore, Ortega y Gasset, Igor Stravinsky, Paul Valéry, Pablo Neruda, André Malraux, Graham Greene and Julian Huxley, Unesco's first Director-General.

The pages of *Sur,* the review she founded in 1931, brought to Latin America the great intellectual and artistic movements of the age, and presented to the public such major contemporary Latin American writers as Jorge-Luis Borges, Alejo Carpentier and Julio Cortázar. *Sur* and the publications which appeared under its aegis became a powerful instrument of international cultural co-operation.

Apart from her efforts to promote the meeting of cultures, a task which is central to Unesco's work, Unesco owes this great Argentinian a generous legacy: in 1973 she donated to Unesco a group of estates including her spacious villa at San Isidro. In accordance with her wishes, the villa will be used "for promotion, research, experimentation and development of activities related to culture, literature, art and social communication, which are aimed at improving the quality of human life".

With the death of Victoria Ocampo, her beautiful residence will be converted, as she wished, into a centre of creation and cultural co-operation. Unesco is currently studying various ways of using the Villa Ocampo, including a project for holding there this year an international symposium on translation, a subject in which Victoria Ocampo was particularly interested and which was the theme of one of the most recent issues of *Sur.* The life and work of Victoria Ocampo were evoked by Jacques Rigaud in an article published in the August-September 1977 issue of the *Unesco Courier.*

The tribute to Roger Caillois, written by Jean d'Ormesson and published in the February 1979 issue of the *Unesco Courier,* is an extract from a longer article to be published shortly in the quarterly review *Diogenes*—Editor.

BRODARD GRAPHIQUE, COULOMMIERS – Dépôt légal C 1 – Mars 1979 – IMPRIMÉ EN FRANCE *(Printed in France).*

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news from unesco

A bulletin published by
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Commission Studies Democratization of Communication

Should there be an international code of ethics for journalists? If so, who should be responsible for drawing it up and administering it? And what about the responsibilities of those who own or control the media? Should there be a code of ethics for them as well? And what are the interests of the public, the "consumers" of mass media, in all of this?

These were a few of the questions raised by the International Commission for the Study of Communication problems at its fourth session in Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia, in January. Under the chairmanship of Mr. Sean MacBride, Nobel and Lenin Peace Prizewinner and former foreign minister of Ireland, the Commission examined reactions of governments, non-governmental organizations and private institutions to its interim report which had been presented to the Unesco General Conference last October. It also adopted tentative guidelines for the preparation of its final report to be published at the end of this year.

In addition to the possibility or advisability of a code of ethics, the Commission discussed, among other topics, such issues as concrete measures which could be taken towards the establishment of a new world information and communication order, and how to achieve a greater democratization of communication.

Commission members were divided on the code of ethics question. They noted that the subject had been discussed at a seminar in Stockholm sponsored by the Commission in April, 1978, and in which news agencies, newspapers and broadcasting organizations had been widely represented. There had, however, been no unanimity on the question.

While several members made persuasive arguments in favour of an international code of ethics, others expressed strong reservations about the idea, although agreeing that such regulations might be useful at the national level. In the end, the Commission asked its Secretariat to prepare a comparative study of national codes of ethics or conduct, press councils, advertising codes, ombudsmen and other ways of setting standards, in order to see what common elements might be distinguished as a basis for a possible international code.

In the discussion on democratization of communication, several aspects were stressed. They included access to news sources; access to and participation in the mass media; democratization of management and professional decision-making in the mass media, and the right to reply. In this connection, it was suggested that the Commission might study what would be required to bring up to date the Convention on the Right to Reply, adopted 25 years ago, but ratified so far by only four countries.

There was also a long discussion of ownership, control and financing of the mass media. Agreeing that the poorer countries of the Third World had no option but public ownership of the media, the Commission urged an examination of various models of state financing which allow for autonomy of operation. Examples were cited from Japan, Canada, United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, India, the United States and Egypt to illustrate the wide variety of experiences in this field, especially insofar as broadcast media were concerned.

In still another discussion, Commission members agreed that communication is such an important part of modern everyday life that

Photo Alexis Vorontzoff/Unesco

The Malian newspaper *Kibaru* has a network of voluntary "correspondents" who help the editorial staff to adapt its contents to meet the needs of its rural readers.

understanding of it must be taught in primary and secondary schools, perhaps in the form of "communication appreciation" courses similar to "art appreciation" or "music appreciation" courses now offered in many schools. Access to and participation in the media require first of all a knowledge of how they operate, it was suggested, and furthermore, if citizens are to take part effectively in the formulation of communication policies, they must know what the options are.

The Commission asked its Secretariat to furnish additional documentation on a wide range of subjects before its next meeting, scheduled for 26 to 30 March in New Delhi, India. Subsequent meetings will be held in Mexico in June and in Paris in September.

Asian Ministers Discuss Communication Policies

Ministers and experts from 23 countries of Asia and Oceania met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from 5 to 14 February to discuss communication policies for their countries and for the region.

The meeting marked a crucial point in the history of man's efforts to achieve better communication, Unesco Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow told the closing session. He congratulated the 184 delegates for bringing "the international community one step nearer to general agreement and solidarity in regard to communication."

The "Kuala Lumpur Declaration", which the conference adopted by acclamation, established the essential link between community and communication, he added, and it also emphasized the importance of communication for development planning. Indeed, he said, without communication "no social structure can be formed, no society can unify its destiny and work for its own advancement."

Unesco TV Programme Launches International Year of the Child

Said Valéry Giscard d'Estaing: "It is my hope that this year the smiles of children will light up the world and give us faith and conviction in our struggle for peace and progress".

And Leonid Brezhnev added: "Our purpose is to teach children to be generous, to live with all people, regardless of nationality or colour, in friendship as good neighbours, and to respect work. We want to teach them to work for the benefit of all people".

As for Jimmy Carter, he declared: "We will be eager to help others... Working through Unicef and other United Nations agencies... I think we can enhance the opportunity for better clothing, housing, food, medical care and education on the part of children in all nations".

The occasion was a special television programme, co-produced by Unesco and the first channel of the French state television, to launch the International Year of the Child, 1979. Broadcast in France on Sunday, 28 January, the programme is being adapted into many different languages and is expected to be shown in some 40 to 50 countries.

In addition to filmed messages from seven world leaders, the programme includes songs and dances by children's groups from various regions of the globe. Besides Messrs. Giscard d'Estaing, Brezhnev and Carter, the chiefs of state include Presidents Carlos-Andrés Peréz of Venezuela, Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and H.M. Bhumibol Adulyadej, the King of Thailand. There are also messages by Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco; Mr. Mahamed Mili, Director-General of the International Telecommunications Union, and Mr. Henri R. Labouisse, Executive Director of Unicef. The programme is presented by Peter Ustinov.

This international television programme is, however, only one of many Unesco activities being carried out in connection with IYC. Others, already undertaken or planned for future months, include: a series of co-production programmes in co-operation with national TV organizations; special issues of the *Unesco Courier;* a commemorative poster by the Cuban artist René Portocarrero; a worldwide children's drawing contest being carried out simultaneously in 85 countries under the sponsorship of Unesco, Unicef and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees; a picture book entitled "A World for Everybody"; an International Children's Day at Unesco Headquarters, 3 October, 1979; a joint Unesco-Unicef pavilion at the "Man and His World" exhibition in Montreal, Canada; photo sheets, special radio programmes and other audio and visual material; and, last but not least, a series of gala concerts in Japan for the benefit of children's projects in the least developed countries.

In a more general manner, many of Unesco's programme activities during the year are being oriented to reflect the needs and concerns of children. In education, for example, the major regional and international conferences being organized this year, such as the 37th session of the International Conference on Education, will take into account preoccupations related to IYC. Particular attention is being paid to the extension and improvement of pre-school education and to the particular problems of handicapped children.

With respect to social sciences, efforts are being made to improve the protection of the rights of children with special emphasis on the situation of children of migrant workers. As far as culture is concerned, there is a series of activities aimed at the promotion and development of children's books and children's libraries.

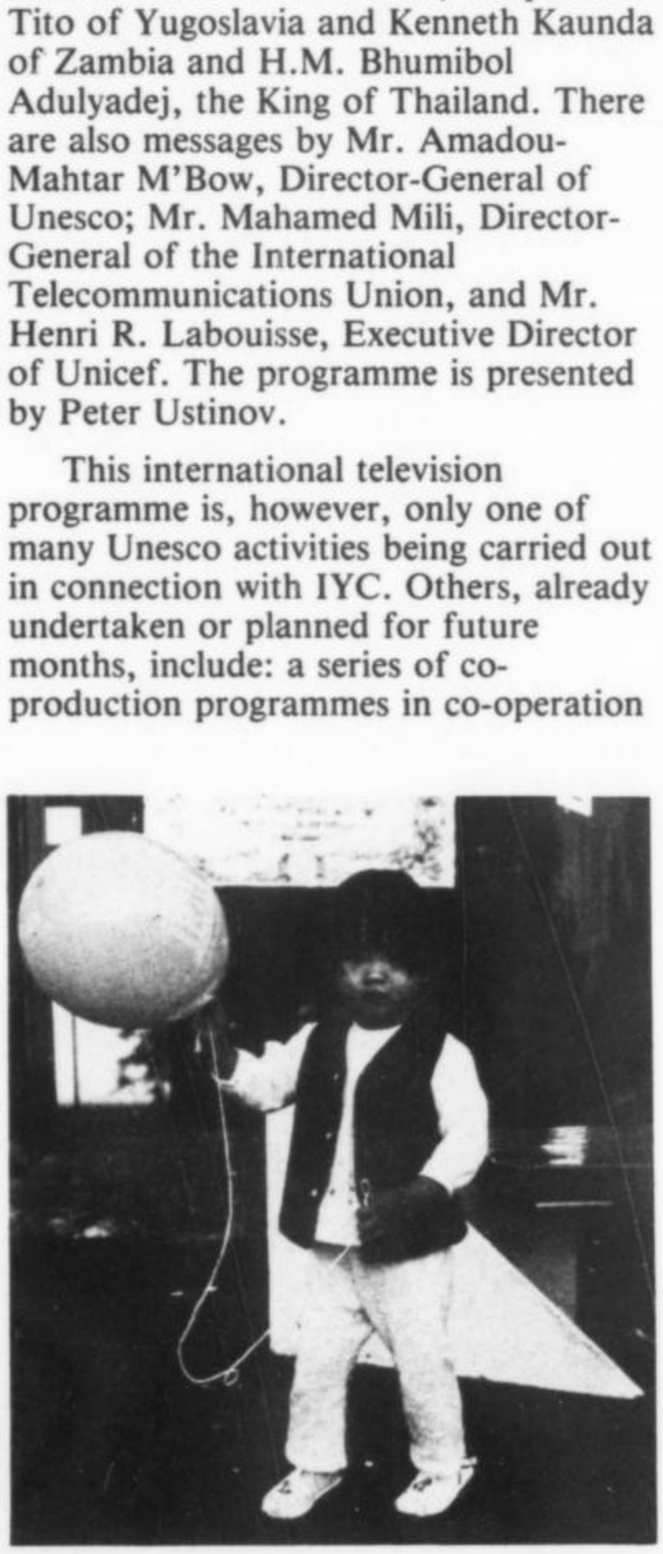

Photo Inez Forbes/Unesco

Most Often Translated: Lenin and the Bible

Lenin, Shakespeare, Agatha Christie, Jules Verne and Enid Blyton may have little else in common, but they are among the authors most frequently published in translation. Lenin, in fact, heads the list of authors; the Bible remains the book most frequently published in different languages.

This is revealed by the 27th edition of Unesco's *Index Translationum,* just published and covering some 46,384 translations of books published in 62 countries in 1974. The translation business is booming these days say the Unesco editors, noting that the first edition of the international bibliography listed only 8,570 translations for the year 1948.

Books for children are not listed as a separate category in the *Index Translationum,* but in honour of International Year of the Child the Unesco staff have made some attempt to evaluate translations of such works. To the extent that the Bible is read by children, it ranks as one of the most often translated texts, followed by *Alf laila wa-laila* ("Tales from the Arabian Nights"). Comic books are also often translated, and these include not only the well-known Walt Disney productions, but also comic book versions of a number of classics of world literature, history and religion. In addition to the ever-popular Enid Blyton, the most often translated authors of children's books include Caroline Keene (spelled "Quine" for the French editions), Captain W.E. Johns, Louisa M. Alcott and James Fenimore Cooper, but the list also contains such great storytellers as Alexandre Dumas, Robert Louis Stevenson, Erich Kaestner, Mark Twain, Antoine de Saint-Exupery, A.A. Milne and Lewis Carroll.

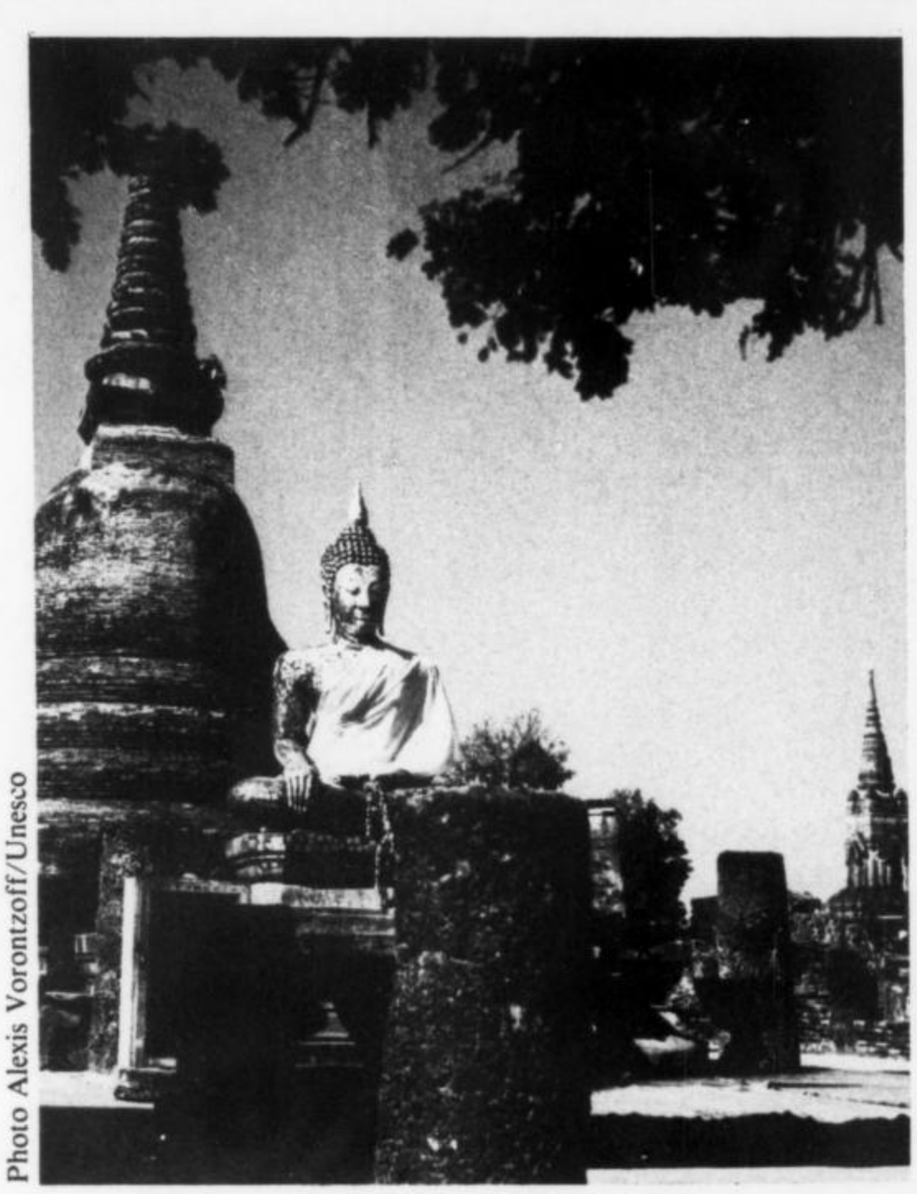

Photo Alexis Vorontzoff/Unesco

Wat Mahatat, the principal temple of the ancient Thai capital of Sukhothai.

Save Sukhothai— A New Unesco Appeal

Sukhothai is not only the cradle of Thai civilisation. It is at the same time "one of those very special places where the culture of a nation, having attained the plenitude of its powers, transcends that nation's own frontiers to enrich the universal heritage."

It was in these terms that Unesco Director-General Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow launched an international appeal in January to preserve Sukhothai, threatened by decay. In Sukhothai, he said, architects, sculptors and craftsmen had created an urban landscape to whose majesty and beauty the remains still standing bore silent witness. From this capital of the first Thai Empire, established between the 13th and 15th centuries, Theravada Buddhism began to spread its influence throughout the region. The sculpture of Sukhothai represented a uniquely original contribution to religious art in which the concept of the Supreme Being was idealized and the figure of the walking Buddha made its first appearance.

Today Sukhothai with its 126 monuments is in danger from a two-pronged assault by natural and social phenomena. On the one hand, vegetation is speeding the decay of the monuments and rainwater is eating away their foundations. On the other hand, the activities of the local population are encroaching upon the archaeological site and an increasing flow of tourists is threatening its harmony and serenity.

The Royal Government of Thailand, determined to preserve Sukhothai both as a religious centre and as part of the national heritage, has designated it as an "historical park", and with expert assistance from Unesco has established a master plan for restoration of the monuments, the development of excavations, flood control, relocation of a number of villages and re-creation of Sukhothai's authentic setting through the encouragement of traditional cultural activities.

It has already mustered considerable resources to carry out the plan, but has also asked Unesco to make an appeal for international solidarity in the form of technical co-operation or financial assistance.

Mexican Project Wins Unesco Architecture Prize for 1978

A plan for the step-by-step conversion of an ancient historic building in Yahualica, Mexico, into office space for the city administration has been awarded the 1978 Unesco Prize for Architecture.

The plan, devised by seven students of the Technological Institute for Higher Studies of the West, in Guadalajara, was selected from among 234 entries by a jury composed of eminent personalities from the architectural profession. The theme of the competition had called for participants to prepare a study of the space required for the municipal administration of a town of between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants.

Presenting the award on behalf of the Director-General at a ceremony at Unesco Headquarters in January, Mr. Federico Mayor, the Deputy Director-General, expressed his pleasure that the winners (Ana Martung, Carmen Ortiz, Carlos Ashida, Víctor Pérez Sandi, Rafael Gutiérrez, Salvador de Alba and Gaspar Alarcón) were so young. Unesco, he added, would follow with interest the course of the project through to its realization.

The Unesco Prize for Architecture, which was established in 1969 and is jointly sponsored by the International Union of Architects, is awarded every three years. Previous winners have included architects from Japan, the USSR and India.

Photo Michel Claude/Unesco

The Deputy Director-General of Unesco, Mr. Federico Mayor, in conversation with the youthful winners of the 1978 Unesco Architecture Prize.

Canada in Paris

"Canada Days": from 11 to 23 May the permanent delegation of Canada will present at Unesco House various aspects of Canadian culture. Events will include theatrical performances, exhibitions, concerts, film showings with the participation of well known artists.

Today's World— a Portrait in Figures

What country has the most television sets in proportion to its population? The United States, right?

Wrong. It's Monaco, according to the 1977 edition of the *Unesco Statistical Yearbook,* just published. The latest figures available show the tiny principality with 640 TV receivers per thousand inhabitants, while the USA had only 571. Together with Guam (540 per thousand), they are the only places in the world with more than one television set for every two people. Canada follows close behind, however, with 428 per thousand. Then come Bermuda (368), France and Sweden (363 each) and Australia (351).

In the International Year of the Child, with world attention focussed on the needs and problems of children in all countries, the *Statistical Yearbook* reveals sharp differences in school enrolment rates in the different regions. For children under 11, the rate was 95.5 per cent for Europe, for example, compared with 87.7 per cent in Oceania, 63.5 per cent in Asia and only 51.1 per cent in Africa. Secondary school enrolment varies from 2 per cent in Upper Volta to 92 per cent in the Netherlands. And as for books for children, 12 African countries together produced only 201 titles in 1975 and 1976, while the United States published 2,210 titles in 1976 alone, the United Kingdom 2,575 and Japan 2,217.

Fifteenth of a series which began in 1963, the 1977 *Statistical Yearbook* gives in its 1064 pages a portrait in figures of today's world in the fields of education (such as levels of schooling, enrolment, expenditure), science and technology (manpower, spending, indicators of scientific and technological development), culture and communication (libraries, publishing, newspapers and periodicals, newsprint consumption, films, radio and television).

The United States with 61,222,000 copies of daily newspapers in 1975, and Japan with 57,830,000 remain the largest overall consumers of daily papers. However, when circulation is measured against population, the Swedes turn out to be the world champion newspaper readers, with 572 copies per thousand population. They are followed by the German Democratic Republic, Iceland and Norway, in that order. At the other end of the scale, the *Yearbook* lists some 38 countries and territories which do not have even a single daily newspaper.

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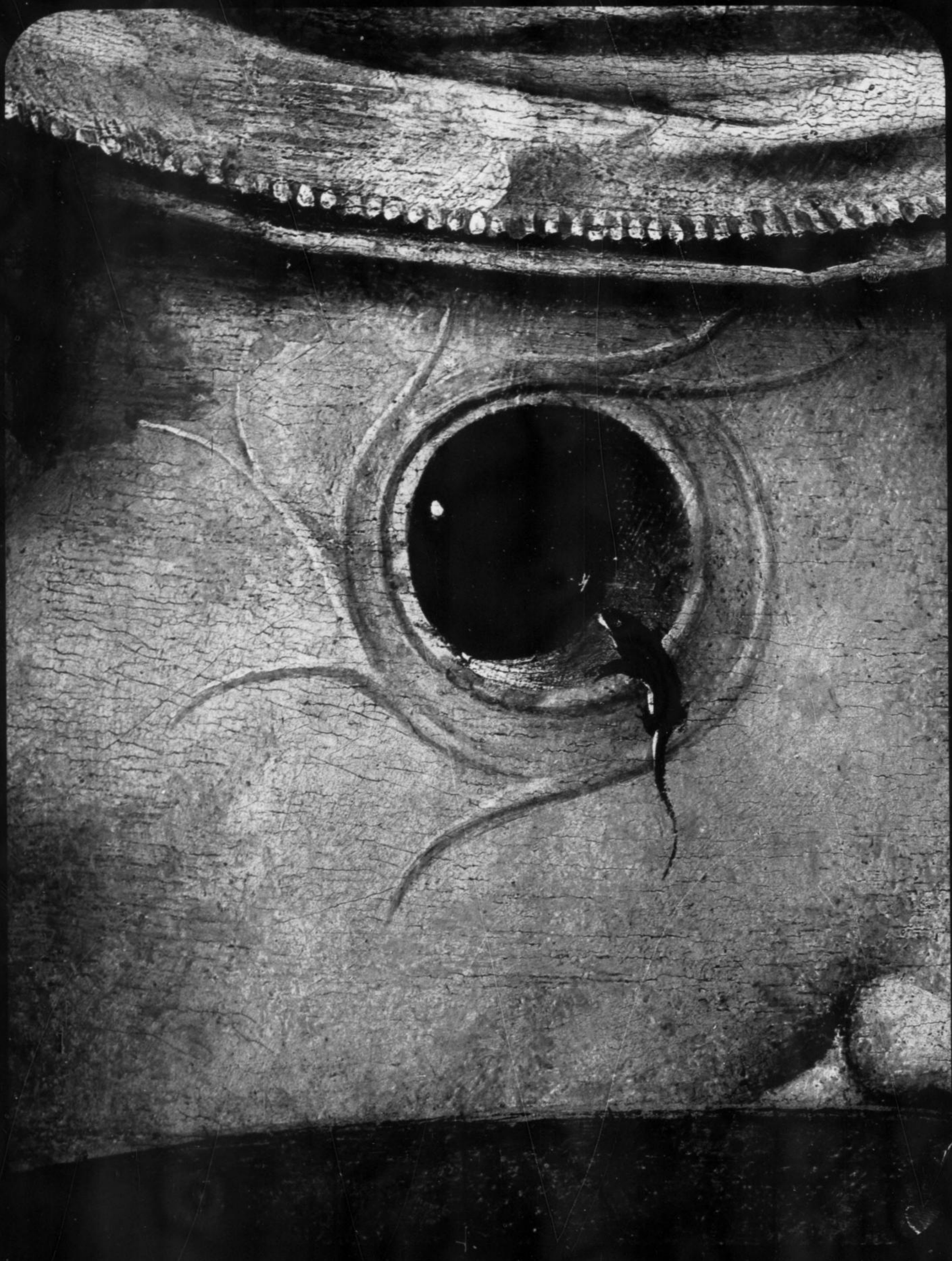

Detail of *The Vision of Tundal*, by Hieronymus Bosch
Photo Oronoz, Madrid. Ziolo, Paris. Lazaro Galdiano Museum, Madrid

Peering at the outside world, yet revealing inner mysteries, this enigmatic eye is a detail of *Visio Tundali*, a work by the fifteenth-century painter Hieronymus Bosch. It evokes the expectation, sometimes anxious, which is the prelude to all communication question of what television does to children as what children do with the material that television portrays." (See article page 4.)